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ABSTRACT

Examined in this book are issues related to the education of at-risk children and youth. Part 1 of the volume consists of 12 original papers presented and discussed at the Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO) 1987 Summer Institute. Papers concern: (1) values, standards, and climate in schools serving students at risk; (2) schools and poor communities; (3) race, income, and educational inequality; (4) why effective schools rarely exist for at-risk elementary school and adolescent students; (5) contexts that constrict and construct the lives and minds of public school adolescents; (6) educational challenges and opportunities in serving limited-English-proficient students; (7) achievement for at-risk students; (8) productive educational practices for at-risk youth; (9) public support for successful instructional practices for at-risk students; (10) accelerating elementary education for disadvantaged students; (11) adolescent pregnancy prevention; and (12) building a network of opportunity for the majority of youth through a public/private careers service. A summary and discussion of the institute concludes this part; part 2 contains the Council's recommendations for action, policy statement, analysis of goals and activities to be pursued by the Chief State School Officers, and a model state statute to provide educational entitlements for at-risk students. (RH)

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SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS AT RISK

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Analysis and Recommendations of the Council of Chief State School Officers

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SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS AT RISK

Analysis and Recommendations of
the Council of Chief State School Officers

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The Council is especially grateful to the contributing authors of this volume for helping chief state school officers better understand the challenges for schools and state leaders to provide more effective educational programs for at-risk students. Recognition also goes to Ellen Hoffman, who joined us at the CCSSO Summer Institute in Montana and summarized both the presentations of the authors and the subsequent discussions among chief state school officers.

The Council received major assistance from its Study Commission, a Council-sponsored group composed principally of deputy state superintendents of education. Under the perceptive leadership of its president, Dudley Flood of North Carolina, and with special help from Maryland Deputy State Superintendent Claud E. Kitchens, the Study Commission surveyed and reported state actions and programs to serve at-risk students and developed important recommendations to improve education for these students. It was assisted in its work by Gloria Frazier, who had primary responsibility for the survey design. Margaret Goertz and Richard Coley of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) organized and analyzed the extensive data and information provided through survey returns from the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. The Council is especially grateful for these superb, partially donated services of the ETS staff in preparing the report "Children At Risk: The Work of the States."

The Council also received essential advice and counsel from a group of outside experts and CCSSO staff members whose discussions led to development of the Council's model state legislation demonstrating one way to implement the policy statement adopted by Council members. This group met in three all-day full-group meetings and several small subgroup meetings. Members of this working group included CCSSO President David W. Hornbeck

(the chairman), Diane August, Adrienne Bailey, Susan Fuhrman, Curman Gaines, Evelyn Ganzglass, Tom Gilhool, Jay Heubert, Phyllis McClure, Terry Peterson, Marshall Smith, David Tatel, William Taylor, Ray Valdivieso, and Linda Brown Warren, plus CCSSO staff members Cynthia G. Brown, Christopher Harris, Carnie Hayes, Glenda Partee, and Ramsay Selden. William Taylor captured successfully our goals and program ideas and is responsible for drafting the model state statute.

The Council would like to thank the Aetna Life and Casualty Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Exxon Education Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the William T. Grant Foundation, the Jennings Foundation, the Mott Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation for their critical and timely financial assistance to CCSSO initiatives for students at risk of school failure. These foundations recognize the serious problems facing young people and have taken important steps to help assure that they receive adequate educational services. CCSSO is grateful for their past and continued support.

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ALL OUR CHILDREN

An Introduction

David W. Hornbeck

Attorney, Hogan & Hartson, and
Visiting Professor of Education and
Public Policy, The Johns Hopkins University

I had the honor of serving the Council of Chief State School Officers as its president during 1987. Each year one of the president's responsibilities is to identify the major focus of the Council. For 1987, we chose to focus on the children and youth of the nation with whom we have historically failed. There is no greater challenge nor more urgent imperative facing the nation and its schools than to ensure that children and youth at risk of school failure become productive workers, nurturing members of families, and effective citizens.

Most commentaries about at-risk students begin with a litany of statistics revealing our failure to succeed with sizable numbers of youngsters. They are statistics of poverty, school failure, drug and alcohol abuse, crime, and welfare dependence. The numbers are grim and they are real.

But I want to introduce this book by presenting the message in a different form, as expressed by a South Carolinian named Ina Hughs:

We pray for children
    who put chocolate fingers everywhere,
    who like to be tickled,
    who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants,
    who sneak Popsicles before supper,
    who erase holes in math workbooks,
    who can never find their shoes.
And we pray for those
    who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,
    who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers,
    who never "counted potatoes,"
    who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead,
    who never go to the circus,
    who live in an x-rated world.
We pray for children
    who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,
    who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish,
    who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money,
    who cover themselves with Band-aids and sing off key,
    who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink,
    who slurp their soup.

And we pray for those
who never get dessert,
who have no safe blanket to drag behind them,
who watch their parents watch them die,
who can't find any bread to steal,
who don't have any rooms to clean up,
whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser,
whose monsters are real.
We pray for children
who spend all their allowance before Tuesday,
who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food,
who like ghost stories,
who shove dirty clothes under the bed and never rinse out the tub,
who get visits from the tooth fairy,
who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool,
who squirm in church and scream in the phone,
whose tears we sometimes laugh at, and whose smiles can make us cry.
And we pray for those
whose nightmares come in the daytime,
who will eat anything,
who have never seen a dentist,
who aren't spoiled by anybody,
who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,
who live and move, but have no being.
We pray for children who want to be carried, and for those who must,
for those we never give up on and for those
who don't get a second chance.
For those we smother . . . and for those who will grab the hand of
anybody kind enough to offer it.

I invite you to read Ms. Hughs' warm and insightful words again. This time, instead of "We pray for . . .," think "We accept responsibility for. . . ." Ms. Hughs' children are the children of America. Many, even most, succeed, and for them we rejoice. But millions of others fail in school and become the disposable children of America, the children upon whom this book focuses.

Why are the chief education officers of the fifty states concentrating on children and youth at risk of school failure? And why now? One reason, of course, is the humane or ethical one. Millions of America's children, failed in many ways by society, face a lifetime of grinding, debilitating poverty and its dismal accompaniments. Mere decency should be adequate motivation to reach these youngsters. Regrettably, evidence abounds that decency and compassion alone have not been sufficient to generate the imagination, will, and resources necessary to educate at-risk students for independent, productive, and effective citizenship. Decency and compassion are now bolstered by enlightened self-interest—demographic and economic circumstances—to provide a clear imperative. We must equip *all* Americans, as the Carnegie Forum put it last year, to "work smarter."

Real income is down; the incidence of poverty is up; job growth is concentrated in lower-paying, relatively dead-end private sector occupations. While the youthful population is declining, the proportion of minorities and of those for whom English is not the first language is growing. Minority youths and those with limited English proficiency are disproportionately represented among the poor and among those with whom schools fail.

Because of the decline in the youthful population, our nation can no longer afford economically disposable human beings. We need the gifted; we need the poor; we need the white and middle class; we need the black and brown; and we need those who come to us speaking a first language other than English.

In our grand experiment in universal free public education in America, we have fashioned a system that works relatively well, especially for those who are white, well-motivated, and from stable middle- to upper-income families. But as students have deviated more and more from that norm, the system has served them less and less well. We sometimes seem to say to them, "We've provided the system. It's not our fault if you don't succeed." Whether that attitude is right or wrong, the critical mass of at-risk youth has grown proportionately so large that we are in some danger of being toppled by our sense of rightness and righteousness. Instead of blaming the students for failing to fit the system, we must design and implement a new structure that provides appropriate educational and related services to those most at risk.

This book chronicles a year of growth and activity for the nation's chief state school officers. From the start, we were clear about our direction. We were less clear about the steps necessary to accomplish our goals. Part 1 of this volume consists of twelve original papers prepared for the Council of Chief State School Officers. They were presented and discussed at our annual Summer Institute in Whitefish, Montana. The papers provided the "chiefs" with a powerful intellectual context for considering and formulating subsequent steps.

Debate and reflection at the Summer Institute led to the centerpiece of the Council's first year of focus on at-risk children and youth: the CCSSO Statement "Assuring School Success for Students At Risk" and the accompanying illustrative model statute. Both appear in Part 2 of this book. Also in Part 2 are the report and recommendations of the Study Commission, a Council-sponsored group composed primarily of deputy chief state school officers.

On Monday, November 16, 1987, the Council unanimously endorsed the Statement. If translated from rhetoric to reality, the impact on school structure and, more significantly, on school and student performance, will be profound. The objective is high-school graduation, with no reduction in standards, for virtually all students by the year 2000.

As *Education Week* noted on November 18, 1987, "['Assuring School Success for Students At Risk'] represents the clearest signal yet that state officials are ready to be held accountable for the academic performance of all students within their jurisdictions."

The Statement is rooted in four critical assumptions evident in the Summer Institute papers:

1. All students can learn.
2. *What* each student learns must include a challenging and common curriculum.
3. *How, where,* and *when* learning occurs and *who* delivers the instruction should vary according to *what works.*
4. We know how to succeed with children from diverse circumstances. To succeed is not easy, and, in some situations, it is extremely difficult. But the routes to success are not mysterious.

Without a fundamental affirmation of these four assumptions, a commitment to meet the needs of all children is probably folly, at best, and hypocrisy, at worst. However, to affirm the assumptions without a new and fundamentally different commitment to serve successfully the nation's children and youth at risk of school failure is immoral.

Thus the Council calls for the enactment of statutes in each state that *guarantee* to young people at risk those educational and education-related health and social services reasonably calculated to yield high-school graduation. The notion of a guarantee is not merely rhetorical; the Council affirms its truest meaning.

In making this Statement, the chiefs express their willingness, even their eagerness, to accept the school's share of the responsibility for reaching *all* of the nation's children. They recognize that any successful strategy will include the school as the fulcrum. However, it is clear the school cannot do the job alone. Thus the Statement calls upon the *state,* not just the state department of education, to stand behind the guarantees.

The guarantees include enrollment in a school that is making substantial and sustained progress; appropriately certified teachers; safe facilities; systematic instruction and adequate material; quality prekindergarten programs; meaningful channels for parent involvement; appropriate health and social services; individual teaching and learning plans; and data, and the capacity for its analysis, to determine intelligently which schools are succeeding and which need help.

The call for such guarantees concludes most unusually. The chief state school officers declare that at-risk students and their parents or representatives should have the means to enforce the guarantees. The chiefs recognize the seriousness of the challenge and have confirmed their commitment to meet it. It is they, as much as any other local or state officials, who would provide administrative procedures and be the object of any necessary judicial initiatives.

The Statement is clear. However, since rhetoric alone does not always fully explicate the breadth and depth of policy statements, model legislation was also prepared to illustrate the guarantees in statutory form. Others throughout the United States may design better, more inventive ways to make the guarantees a reality for *all* students in a *timely* manner. The model statute is *one* good way. It has the following features:

1. The model statute guarantees an effective prekindergarten program for children at risk. Owen Butler, Chairman of the Committee on Economic Development and former Chief Executive Officer of Procter and Gamble, has said, "It is economic stupidity and a moral blunder for any state *not* to provide a quality prekindergarten program for all its impoverished three- and four-year-olds."

2. For children and youth at risk of school failure between kindergarten and the twelfth grade, the statute guarantees three special measures:
   a. The statute requires that schools follow practices that generally result in success with students. Such "promising" practices would likely include appropriately certified staff, planned instructional strategies, adequate supplies of up-to-date textbooks and other materials, affirmative efforts to involve parents at home and at school, safe facilities, and a system of school-based administration with greater flexibility to make decisions.
   b. The statute guarantees students at risk the right to be in a "successful" school. Such a school is defined as one in which more than 75 percent of students are performing at or above a standard determined by the proper state and/or local authorities to be appropriate to satisfactory progress toward graduation. The standard may be based on test performance, dropout rates, attendance data, extracurricular participation, and other measures that school authorities determine to indicate successful momentum toward high-school graduation.

      Recognizing that many schools with large concentrations of at-risk youth would not initially meet the 75 percent standard, the statute also provides that a school will be deemed in compliance if the proportion of its students meeting the standard increases by at least 5 percent per year. The point is that a school should be either "successful" or demonstrably and measurably en route to being "successful." No student should have to bear the burden of attending a school that is neither.

      Thus any at-risk student enrolled in a school that, after an appropriate phase-in period, meets neither the 75 percent success nor the 5 percent improvement standard should have a *right* to transfer to a public school that *does* meet those standards. The school system may determine which public school is appropriate. If the school to which the student must transfer is outside the home district, the home district will have both tuition and transportation responsibilities to the receiving district.

If a school persists in being "unsuccessful," the statute requires action by the local system; if a system has too many "unsuccessful" schools, the statute calls for more substantive state intervention.

Clearly, monitoring of outcomes would necessarily continue. But *how* one achieves the outcomes—which curriculum, what classroom organization, the character of the teaching and administering force, the length of the school day and year, what textbooks, even where learning occurs—can be much more within the decision-making authority of the local school and school system. If the results are good for *all* youngsters, the details of how they are achieved are much less significant.

c. In schools that *have* achieved the 75 percent standard, individual teaching and learning plans (ITLP) are required for students who continue to be at risk of failure. Until a school is "successful," the focus should be on the school, not the individual students. Moreover, wholesale individual plans would likely become boilerplate and stagnant. However, in "successful" schools, it is important to have a vehicle through which continuing attention is riveted on youngsters with whom the school has not yet succeeded.

One final point is significant for youngsters in the kindergarten-through-grade-twelve group. Between kindergarten and the third grade, "at-risk" is defined in terms of poverty level, language development, and school achievement. Between grades four and twelve, the suggested criteria are wholly school-based. With respect to the first two special measures (the right to "promising" practices and the right to be in a "successful" school), the only purpose of the "at-risk" definition is to define which young people have the right to enforce those guarantees. It is *not* to label children, nor is the definition's purpose to encourage classroom "pullouts." Indeed, it can be argued persuasively that a program that pulls students out of a regular classroom is *not* a "promising" practice. The chiefs recognize that the ITLP provision, the third special measure, could be used as a labeling device. However, to use it so and to "track" youngsters accordingly is to misuse a valuable planning tool.

3. The last part of the statute establishes an affirmative duty for school systems to reach out to young people who have dropped out and to re-enroll them in appropriate educational programs.

Finally, the Statement and model statute can set the stage for significant deregulation of education. The word *empowerment* can become more than just jargon. Regulation is necessary only when input is being measured. When orientation is outcome-based or performance-based, the need for regulation wanes significantly. For several reasons, a performance- or outcome-based system meets student needs better than an input-based system.

1. An outcome-based system carries an explicit expectation of success. Success is the rule, not the exception.
2. Assistance from the school system and from the state will be available to schools or school systems needing it.
3. No school wishes to be perceived as unsuccessful.
4. The rewards of success and the consequences of failure will serve to motivate formation of new strategies and expenditure of greater energies for students.

Focusing on outcomes, as the Statement and statute do, can result in unleashing the imagination and energy of millions of parents, teachers, and others associated with local schools.

Some may think that the Statement sounds good but that the statutory translation is problematic. Readers who feel this way are simply urged to be more inventive than the chiefs have been and to design their own way to guarantee the guarantees. But they must *not* simply pursue new categorical programs or new demonstration projects that will disappear when the money is gone. And they must *not* simply go to local, state, and federal funding authorities and, even with greater passion, say as Oliver did to Mr. Bumble, "Please sir, I want some more, sir." Guarantees mean a focus on outcomes with the feet of responsible authority held to the fire. Guarantees mean guarantees. Each state should provide guarantees in its own way, but each state must do it. The next century belongs to the class of youngsters who entered kindergarten last fall. The promise of that century will be fulfilled only if the states make the commitment envisioned by the Statement and the model legislation.

If we are to meet the challenge successfully, our educational system must be restructured. The reforms of the past five years may pale against the requirements of the next ten. This volume is designed to provide an intellectual framework for the required restructuring and to set a policy context within which states, as they exercise their constitutional responsibility for elementary and secondary education, may provide the leadership necessary to succeed with *all our children*.

Part 1

CCSSO SUMMER INSTITUTE

Papers and Discussion

VALUES, STANDARDS, AND CLIMATE IN SCHOOLS SERVING STUDENTS AT RISK

Frank Macchiarola
PRESIDENT, THE ACADEMY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, AND
PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Less than a decade ago, when I assumed the responsibility of heading the nation's largest school system, the amount of interest by other than school professionals in the problems of education in America was minimal. There were very few activities of the public schools that would engender interest on the part of outsiders. We were going our own way without the involvement of others. Since that time, a great deal has happened to change all of that, and many reports have been produced that point to problems within American schools and suggest solutions for these problems. Once virtually isolated, American educators have now been overwhelmed with both the redefinition of the problems and possible solutions.

We define children at risk as those students whose participation in school is marginal and who will ultimately fail to satisfy their graduation requirements. These are students who are failed by our society and who become burdens upon us and their families. Over the years, professional educators have tended to minimize the significance of youngsters in this category. We have resisted the efforts of advocates to account for these children. In 1979, when the New York City Public School System decided on its own initiative to document the number of dropouts in the million-student system, we encountered tremendous resistance to the effort within the school bureaucracy. Before we began the task, some of our school professionals insisted that the figure would be minimal—close to zero—accounted for, I would later discover, by a system that tallied dropouts from September to June, taking great pains to require a formal withdrawal during the school year in order for a student to qualify as a dropout. Of course, by ignoring the students who unofficially dropped out over the course of the school year and by not counting those who did not return at the beginning of the school term, it was clear that the annual rate, even for the poorest of our schools, would be but 2 to 3 percent. Our report, which found the student dropout rate for the school system to be closer to 45 percent, met with hostile reaction, particularly from the leaders of our teachers' unions. Now, after almost a decade, we have come to understand the enormousness of the problem, and we have come to feel quite strongly that our dropout numbers are unacceptably high. It is clear that public education today has a more committed resolve to do something about the problem of dropouts. School leaders have an opportunity to ensure that that resolve is carried out in practice. The data that education departments collect must be focused on the need to record student performance, and hence the lack of it. Data systems must actually track students and ensure that none of them escape from our concern. One of the most disturbing features of American public education to me has been the woeful inattention given to the need for information about how well our schools are doing. Usually, because it is so hard for us to explain the meaning of data, we try to downplay its significance.

Today, before exploring what we can do about our dropout problem, I want to urge you to consider the fact that even these numbers that we are seeing and accepting represent a serious understatement of the problem of students at risk. This is because many students, particularly those who come from suburban communities, from middle-class neighborhoods, or from college-educated parents, are convinced of the need for a high-school diploma even if they do not appreciate the need for a high-school education. By not considering these students as being at risk, we are ignoring the problems of thousands of youngsters who are cynically and marginally participating in the process of schooling, abiding by the rules of the system and seeing no real value in what schooling has to offer. When we enlarge the focus to see that these students are inadequately served, we shift somewhat the way in which we look at reform.

When we examine "at-risk" youth from the standpoint of those who actually fail to attain their diploma, we are evaluating the problem of dropouts in terms of the youngsters and we are actually asking the question "What's wrong with the students?"

In that context we see their problems rather than ours. Statistics show us that they are poor, that they are underprivileged, and that they are socially and educationally deprived. While these conditions are not something to be ignored, misunderstood, or understated, we are in reality seeing and understanding only a part of the problem. This tendency to put school problems in the context of the children's problems is something that school systems have been doing for far too long. One has only to look at the enormous growth of special education in numbers of students and in categories of handicapping conditions to see how strong has been the tendency to see defects and problems in the context of the child rather than in the context of the system of education itself. It is, to my mind, shocking to see how clinical judgments about children have so markedly replaced educational judgments. In any event, when we see the problem of the dropout in terms of the statistics we now regard as significant, we see the problem largely in terms of race and class. Such an analysis puts an extraordinary amount of blame on children. In any view, by doing this we ignore the real culprit—the inadequate and unresponsive school. In addition, such a child-focused view of the problem means that suggestions for reform will understate the extent to which school practices must be improved upon.

I suggest that by ignoring the fact that many youngsters are compelled by parental and societal pressures to stay in school without appreciating the meaning of school, we are avoiding the real challenge to American education.

This is particularly distressing, it seems to me, when school officials dwell on the child's aspects of the problem, where the capacity to do something constructive to solve the problem is severely limited. On the other hand, focusing on the matter of what's wrong with schools and seeking improvement in the condition of the schools give school officials the capacity to do something important and significant. In addition, managers of bureaucracies should well appreciate the fact that giving managers something that they can do gives them a greater sense of commitment to their tasks. School improvement projects—the mainstream projects of state education departments—should be where school dropout programs are concentrated. Such a location emphasizes the centrality of the mission and the priority assigned to success for all students.

When we think about reforming our schools, we must also address several other social changes taking place in America, particularly as they affect our children. Indeed, the most significant of these social changes has to do with the circumstances of the children themselves. I think the observations of our teachers on this matter are most instructive, and many of the classroom teachers report on the condition of children in much the same way. More families when they are intact have two working parents, and so more children return from school to empty homes. More children are born out of wedlock, many to teenage mothers who are students themselves. More families are headed by single parents. More families depend on day-care facilities and still more families need them. More parents are unable to spend time with their children, and increasingly, more parents are unavailable when teachers need to talk to them about their children's problems. Overwhelmingly, the home life and the family life of children have been affected in ways that have had a tremendous impact on the schools.

Even worse, statistics on child abuse and child neglect compiled by local and state agencies across the nation show disturbing increases, not only in the number of cases but in their severity as well. As a consequence, more and more children are joining the ranks of the homeless and the runaways. For school leaders, it is abundantly clear that school officials must work more directly with agencies that deal with health and mental-health and social-service delivery programs. Now, more than ever, it is clear that only a fraction of student needs can be met in the traditional school setting. Unless we begin dialogues with these professionals—dialogues that do not surrender child care to clinically oriented specialists—we will never address the severe social problems that are now a part of the typical student's life. These problems, when associated with underperforming schools, dramatically increase the chances that students will fail out of the school system.

As a result of dramatic social change as well, children in the American society seem further away from adults than ever before. We don't do things in common the way we once did. In fact, the sense of community in America has been seriously eroded. We have become a latchkey society, with children and grown-ups in less frequent contact and interaction. The signs of this are so apparent as to seem epidemic. Even a quick look at a class of student record cards demonstrates the phenomenon of the missing parent. This translates into fewer opportunities for parents and children to work together at a homework assignment. And instead of learning lessons about growing up from parents, our children learn from their peers and from television. These are the lessons which, moreover, are taught without any real attention to their consequences for the children.

Even if our society were paying greater attention to the lessons that should be taught to our children, Americans would still be in the position of offering fewer lessons. There is a great deal of evidence that we as a society have set aside many social rules and conventions that used to define appropriate behavior. The tolerance of diversity, which is a real and positive aspect of pluralism, has carried with it some significant and negative side effects. The most important of these, from the standpoint of the children, is that we have some substantial hesitancy to define or confront things that are evil or wrong. As a result, we are loath to encourage students to pursue things that are good or correct. And when youngsters are looking to adults for guidance and direction, very often they do not appreciate or understand our failure to give it to them. The real task for school reform will be for us to be more aggressive in defining appropriate behavior for students while at the same time respecting their freedom to make appropriate choices for themselves. Clearly, however, students in our schools do not always want to exercise choices and make decisions about their options. Just the other day, my ten-year-old, in a discussion we were having, told me, "I guess you could say, Dad, that I don't like to make decisions."

Many people, including our students who are told that they may define many of their own rules of life, do not see the practice as always and altogether desirable. Many have no problem in relying on the experience and wisdom of others. We as a society ought to see that there is an important and positive aspect to this feeling as well.

I am not advocating that we go back to traditional models of authority which so long dominated the practice of public education. What I am advocating is that we understand that our failure to have a point of view, or to reflect a point of view in the way we live and teach—the failure to give to students guidance based upon our point of view—can often be harmful to children. I am suggesting that while it is true that rulings of the United States Supreme Court and the decisions of state and federal courts that followed have significantly increased the rights of youngsters in school settings—the rights to dress as they wish and to participate in school activities without discrimination on the basis of sex—the courts have not diminished the freedom of teachers to advise and counsel on the basis of what teachers reasonably believe to be in the best interests of the students. All too often students drop out of school because they do not hear from their teachers and administrators. They do not understand how strongly many of their teachers feel that their withdrawal from school before graduation is not good for them.

I am not suggesting that this situation of failing to affirm our beliefs is confined to our schools. Indeed, when you examine what has happened to the moral issues that our nation now faces—from political corruption to Wall Street ethics—you can well understand how poorly we have faced the issues of right and wrong within the context of our society at large.

My basic point on this matter is that our children are at risk because we as a society have put them at risk—and not only because we have failed to feed, clothe, and shelter them, and not because we have singled out classes of them for unequal treatment, but because we have been ignoring some of their very basic needs as children. And we have not been making our schools places where some of these basic needs can be met. We have put virtually all of America's children at risk by failing to communicate with them and by failing to indicate to them what our beliefs are and how those beliefs lead to certain rules for appropriate behavior.

One of the most graphic illustrations of this occurred for me when several high-school students who were participating in the Summer Jobs Program of the New York City Partnership were being disciplined for failing to telephone their superiors and notify them that the student workers were going to be absent on that particular day on account of illness. The students told their supervisors that they did not realize that they were acting improperly. They had never been expected to do this for school, and they did not know that work standards were different. Never before had their participation been so important as to require a notice of absence, and they were pleasantly surprised to realize that their presence was going to make a difference. This was for me both a lesson about the failure to communicate as well as a lesson about the tremendous disparity between the importance of the student's presence at school and the importance of the worker's presence on the job. It is clear that we have been missing some very important lessons in public education.

Based upon what I have seen both as a school person and as an employer of youth, I believe that the challenge for those in public education seeking to deal with students at risk is to bring all students to a more realistic sense of what the world expects of them. This applies to all of the students and requires that we focus on the common needs of all youngsters. It is also important to keep in mind that solutions that deal with real reform are going to have to be very drastic ones. They call for a significant redefinition of the role of public education in our society. If we are going to deal with children's needs, the nine-to-three school day and the 180-day school year must be replaced by a fuller school day and a longer school year. In addition, preschool day care must be integrated into the educational program.

During my tenure as Chancellor of the New York City Public School System, I spent four months as principal of Jamaica High School in Queens. I did so because I wanted to learn firsthand about the high school. The experience taught me a great deal I could not have learned otherwise, for no treatment of the American high school—whether it is Ernest Boyer's or Sara Lightfoot's—fully captures the dynamic of the high school. Student needs come at you at such incredible speed and with such complexity. The teenage years are ones of mystery—and feelings are so often masked by mood. From this experience has come a strong sense that the high school must be tremendously adaptive—defining and redefining instances of success for the students. It must convey warmth and support. At the same time, it must represent authentic standards. Such needs are not met by the certification standards of state departments of education. The most significant impact on the way in which dropouts are assisted will come when school system leaders have put in place systems that guarantee that the very best of our citizens are charged with the responsibility of educating the next generation of our people. Toward that end, we must find ways of lateral entry into the ranks of teachers, supervisors, and administrators.

The reasons for encouraging new entrants into the field of education are, for me, clear enough. It has never ceased to amaze me that American public education has never taken advantage of what in business would be called "market opportunities." We have let so many child-centered activities—from nursery school to extracurricular sports programs to employment of school-age youngsters in after-school programs—escape from the professionals who know the students the best. Even programs to prepare students for college admissions—such as the S.A.T. preparation courses—are run by entrepreneurs rather than by the schools and school professionals themselves. We have conceded too much market share in things concerning children to those who are in the business for profit. Often we have exposed the youngsters to open exploitation.

Part of the reason for the hesitancy of school professionals to be more broadly involved with these child-centered activities stems from the historic fact that the role of the school in the life of children has been rather restricted. The dropout was not a student of concern because for all intents and purposes this was a student who was leaving formal school studies in order to "drop in" to a job. This was a graduate without a diploma, so to speak. The high-school diploma, moreover, was not necessary for a relatively well paying job. We are all familiar with the arguments given by many school people to justify their inattention to the dropout—that schools historically graduated very few of their students; that the high-school diploma was more unusual in the history of American education than most people realize. We also accepted radical tracking in schools, and very often students graduated when they stayed in school long enough to earn graduation, with less than academic diplomas. In New York City, for instance, for many years—and until quite recently—General, Commercial, and Vocational diplomas were granted in addition to Pre-College Academic ones.

It is time as well to put aside some myths that concern the fundamental underpinnings of the school system. Among the historic myths to be set aside is the one that sees the American family as fulfilling the basic and essential role in child formation. To ignore the decline of the institution of the family—as tragic as that actually is—is to refuse to face the reality of the 1980s. Our schools must acknowledge the fact that significant numbers of families in America are not functioning, and when they are, they are all too often not equipped to give the kind of direction that parents have traditionally given to their children. This phenomenon has been particularly evident in large urban centers like New York City, where the number of abortions rivals the number of live births, and where the number of births to unwed mothers rivals the number of births to wives. Consider in addition that many unwed mothers are children giving birth to children, and the traditional family seems almost a rare occurrence.

The decline of other institutions that have historically supported the family, like the churches, makes it abundantly clear that if we are going to deal with the problem of the dropout, school officials and school systems are going to have to transmit messages themselves about right and wrong to our youngsters. Schools are going to have to present more than the formal curriculum: they need to assume a direct role in and a direct responsibility for values education.

Such an enlarged role for the schools—increasing the number of things that schools do and the kinds of things that concern the schools—will not come easy to public education in America, particularly given the unique system of governance that places such a reliance upon local school boards. There must be a very important enlargement of responsibility, in which state education leaders must actually lead. We must broaden the scope of issues that concern school professionals, and we must do it in the face of a tradition of reluctance among school administrators.

The very real understanding that we have about the value of early intervention programs—about programs like Head Start, about the value of the school lunch and school breakfast programs, about programs such as cooperative education—calls for us to institute new programs for our youngsters. These must now be seen in the context of the school system and of the system's responsibility to serve all of the children. School health programs, nutrition education, and sex education are necessary parts of the students' learning. School leaders, moreover, have the responsibility to transmit our ideas and our values to the children. When we abdicate responsibility for confronting the students with issues and programs that they know are important for success in later life, we trivialize in their eyes the value of education. We force the students to question our honesty.

In the context of this enlarged mission of the schools for all of the children, then, there are, I believe, three major issue areas that must be addressed if we are going to deal successfully with the student at risk. Before dealing with these issue areas, I should put my assumptions forward: students of all races and classes are understood to be at risk, and school systems must expand the quality and type of services they make available to their students. I also assume as a matter of fundamental principle that all children are equal, that all children can learn, and that it is the job of the school system to promote that equality and that learning. Such philosophical underpinnings are, I believe, necessary. They assist the educational leader in assessing the extent to which he/she is presiding over a system that is moving toward success.

The first issue area concerns the matter of defining the values of education. For too long, school officials have hidden behind the fact that the schools serve as surrogate family, and hence it is the job of the family to have exclusive control over the basic questions in life. As a result, so many things in school are left unaddressed or unconsidered. School officials have also hidden behind the fact that since America is a pluralist society, no values ought to be promoted, lest we offend a person with few or peculiar ones. If we are going to be serious about dealing with students at risk, we are going to have to confront conduct that is hurtful to youngsters and promote conduct that is beneficial. In New York State recently, our State Commissioner issued rules for pupil grading that sharply limited the right of teachers to consider student absence as a measure of academic performance. Such a technical perspective—paying great deference to student choice—sends the wrong message about the necessity for compulsory attendance. An aggressive stance—that insists that attendance is a good that must be encouraged (with punishment a form of encouragement)—would deliver a far more caring message to a teenager.

One of the major obstacles to a strong position of advocacy on behalf of children has been our deference both to the family and to the state's apparent requirement that the First Amendment insists upon a value neutrality. The incidence of violence to children, often at the hands of their own parents, and the pressing need to have us approach issues of right and wrong should force us to reconsider the hesitant approach we have been taking. We have had a belief in family that is not realistic, and we have had a view of the First Amendment's intrusion into the school that is not warranted. These inappropriate views have had a chilling effect on the determination of school leaders to pursue strongly issues of child advocacy. Indeed, while many families are caring and loving, and while many families nurture their children with tremendous skill, we cannot operate school systems on the basis of a belief that this situation is virtually universal. In point of fact, we must assume—on the basis of evidence before us—that many families ignore and even abuse children on a regular basis. As a result, while we should build school policies and programs that recognize the importance and value of the family, we cannot ignore the situations where the families act to interfere with the learning and positive development of children. Such an observation means that schools must inquire more significantly into the physical and mental condition of children.

We cannot operate school systems that are afraid to assert values because there are religious organizations that have similar kinds of—perhaps even identical—values. While the First Amendment rigidly limits the activity of establishing religion, it does not mean that the impact of lessons of religion must be ignored because they are based on a religious creed.

A perspective that does not concede ground to those who believe in family values and those who believe in state values means that school professionals must encourage programs and activities within the public school system that reinforce what we believe to be positive values for our children. Our programs in citizenship education and values education must be important parts of the students' programs, and they must be taught more than in the abstract. We have an obligation to make these lessons more than academic ones.

I do not believe that we should resort to indoctrination in order to do what I am suggesting. For example, one of the real disparities between school and the business world has to do with the matter of collaboration and cooperation. More often than not, with indifference to the significance of teamwork, student collaboration is not encouraged within the school setting. There are times when particular assignments will result in students working together on a common project, but all too often students are required to work alone and to work to secure their own grades in a particular subject. There are too many teachers who think of joint activity as cheating. And yet, when students enter the work force they will find few work projects that are done in a spirit of noncollaboration, or noncooperation. Perhaps the teacher's isolation in the classroom—where all too often we insist that teachers do all their own work—has taken an unintended toll on the students.

In terms of values education, even though the word of God would surely commend acts of hard work, honesty, and integrity, students do not need to learn about these virtues by having God's word invade the public school setting. United States Secretary of Education William Bennett has said it more eloquently than I. Students can learn about values by observing good school practice that encourages these values by example. And for us to fail to give these messages is a real abdication of our professional responsibility.

School administrators must also inform the students about practices that they think are troublesome or harmful to students. Some of these, such as truancy, will meet with virtually unanimous agreement. Others of these, such as student grooming or student dress, will run into significant opposition. While I am quite sympathetic to students' rights, I think students must hear from adults, particularly about things that are important to them, even if social conventions on some of these matters are not unanimously agreed to. A student going on a job interview should hear about matters of dress and grooming, and often the only adult available to give sound advice is the teacher. It would be a shame if we let an overscrupulous sense of student rights interfere with the teacher's opportunity to offer guidance to students.

The real key is for us to pick and practice our values carefully. It is for us to do things that affirm our values and at the same time not impose them on students, thereby depriving them of their rights. After all, we should be able to give the students the benefit of our judgment without at the same time imposing our will. To find a happy medium does require a great deal of sensitivity and effort on our part, and I have no doubt that we will all go through a period of trial and error in the process. It is, however, necessary for us to make the effort. As a society we have been failing miserably at both affirming our beliefs and living by them. If we hope to keep our children, we must improve in the effort.

As a consequence of our failure to affirm our beliefs, a great number of youngsters do not know that grown-ups actually do care about things of meaning. There is a great deal of skepticism that makes what schooling and teachers are all about a far too elusive concept for many of our students to grasp. There is a real reluctance on their part to consider that those of us in education really have a caring message to deliver. There are too many students in our school systems who believe that teachers don't care. And too often we confirm that view because of the way in which we respond to the youngsters themselves. There are some ways of observing the matter of care and some ways of encouraging and rewarding those who do care. We are a great distance from making this a formal part of our strategies for school improvement.

The second area calling for a significant change in schooling if we are to confront the matter of the student at risk has to do with the standards that presently exist in public education in America. I heard it from the students themselves whenever I visited a high school and asked whether the schoolwork was "hard enough." And report after report has echoed what has now become a litany: school is too easy and the course content of classes in the public schools is too watered-down. The students are not challenged and it is not difficult at all to satisfy state requirements for a diploma.

Part of the reason that the standards are too simple is that we require the same basic level of achievement for virtually every graduate. As a tailor will tell you when you try to fit every customer into the same size 44 suit—there are some customers with too much suit, some with too much body, and a slight few for whom the suit provides the ideal fit. As I indicated previously, for many years in New York City, we offered different types of diplomas. Students could choose to follow a different course of study as they wished. There is something to be said for this system as there is for the system currently in effect in New York State, where Regents diplomas are issued to those students who attain graduation requirements with academic distinction occasioned by a more exacting course of study and passing grades on several state-administered tests.

We should try to challenge students with graduation requirements that demonstrate real achievement. In order to do that and to maintain a system of schooling that offers an education to all, some type of categorization is necessary. Students know well enough that the world is competitive. They know that many things they like—such as athletics—are competitive as well. There is no reason that school should ignore the reality of the world, and the reality of what students often like. A personalized program—that challenges and that offers the opportunity for success—is a deterrent to the tendency to drop out.

We must also ensure that the overall student workload is increased. By every standard we know to be reasonable, it is clear that the course of study in schools in the United States is not as rigorous as it should be and does not approach standards of the school systems of the major industrial nations of the Western world. The students are not expected to attain levels attained in these competing nations, and this is particularly true in the sciences and in mathematics. In addition to the quality of work in mathematics and science is the matter of work in the social sciences. The work of Diane Ravitch shows—dramatically and tragically—that most of our students have no real sense of history. In addition, their knowledge of literature and of the classics is also sparse. Stating the matter simply, American students are woefully unprepared for serious work. These observations are not being made from the standpoint of encouraging only college-bound students; they are made from the perspective of all students who should be challenged in school settings to do a better job in their academic endeavors. Make no mistake about it, the failure to challenge our students to attain excellence is related to their understanding that school does not have anything of consequence to offer to them. And it is not student performance alone that needs encouragement, but teacher performance as well. For that matter, the low expectations for our pupils is a shared responsibility of all of us, particularly those of us who set standards for our youngsters—including school superintendents, state chiefs, and for that matter, textbook publishers.

In addition to increased rigor in the traditional subjects of the high-school curriculum, the school system should also ensure that student course work includes subjects that will be relevant to the future lives of the students. Toward that end, we should have a curriculum that includes material that students will find useful in life. In many respects we have forced the high-school program to focus on college preparation. For many students these courses are not attractive and in many ways discourage students from having a positive view of their schooling. I believe that a college-preparatory curriculum encourages many high-school students to believe that their high-school education is not really intended for their success. In the process, they regard us as encouraging them to find activities outside of the school setting. For many students there is a real need to make their high-school education have something in common with their career goals. Vocational education courses and commercial courses play a significant role in the education of our youngsters, and they deserve to be strengthened in the course of study that we offer to students. At the same time, competency in some of the employability skills that youngsters need in order to secure and retain a job must also be part of student learning. I firmly believe that vocational courses, where the teachers are working with students in a hands-on atmosphere, have much to offer to high-school students who do not quite appreciate the reasons for a high-school education.

In our experience in the New York City Public Schools, where students had the opportunity to choose options in programs such as those run in the vocational high schools, we found a much greater likelihood of success. The attendance rates for these programs were higher and student performance indicators showed a greater level of student achievement. Simply put, these programs offered the students their choice and offered programs that led to careers that students appreciated and that they actually wanted. The school system did not offer them mysterious options. There was a serious connection to the "real world."

The third area of significance in dealing with the student at risk has to do with the type of school atmosphere we require for public education. It is clear that our high schools, particularly those in America's large cities, are often too large and impersonal. Perhaps the record for this—which appeared in the book of world records—was for DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, New York, which had more than 11,000 students enrolled at one time. Urban high schools designed for more than 3,000 students are commonplace in large-city school districts. They are poor settings for a high-school education. The reasons for this are related to new definitions of what schools should be doing in terms of providing for individual student need. It is also clear that these schools do not function as well with students who need to have their relationships to the school community reinforced by the structure of the school. Unless the school offers the students a sense of community, a place where they can feel their identity and establish personal relationships with their teachers and their peers, the school is not serving the students in an appropriate way. Schools must define themselves to their students in terms of community. These schools must represent a place where values and standards are practiced if they are going to be successful with students. Students are asking us to give meaning to their activities and their lives. And the development of a school community is a very effective way of bringing that into being.

In addition, schools must also define themselves in terms of how they use their students and how they respect the products of their efforts. One of the most serious failures of our public education system is the failure to value the work product of the students. In many respects, too many educators have ignored the ability of students to be workers. Minimizing students' ability to perform, moreover, means that teachers end up supervising less creative and less stimulated students. When students think that work is something they will encounter later in life rather than perform in school, we have wasted significant human resources.

In this introductory paper I have focused on the rights and needs of all of our students. I have asked that you think of these needs in terms of what good schooling can provide for all of our students. I have also asked that you be aggressive in pursuing the rights of youngsters and that you pursue those rights in the context of school improvement. I have asked as well that that improvement be basic and that it seek to establish schools as rigorous, yet caring communities. I hope that it has been evident that I believe in youngsters and in their ability to be successful. I hope as well that I have communicated a love of school and what school can do to transform lives. I also hope that I have conveyed my sincere appreciation of the efforts of so many in education to do something for those who are all too often ignored.

The work of education is so challenging—and so worthwhile. And we should all be grateful for the work being done for America's children. At the same time we should remember that the challenge ahead is a great one.

SCHOOLS AND POOR COMMUNITIES

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In 1982 the proportion of children living under the poverty line reached one out of five for the first time since 1965. The number of poor children grew by nearly a third in just three years and has not returned to 1979 levels even after several years of sustained economic recovery. But the well-justified concern about this dramatic rise in the number of children living in poverty has drawn attention away from a longer-term and potentially more serious development: the concentration of poverty in the inner city. In the past two decades, the impoverishment of inner-city neighborhoods and the out-migration of middle- and working-class residents have significantly altered the family and community context in which children grow up. Among the possible consequences for education are a deterioration of the ability of families and neighborhoods to supervise children and support the schools, growing race and class isolation in inner-city schools, and a decline in the financial resources available to big-city school districts. Furthermore, despite the manifest differences between rural poor areas and urban ghettos, we find that they share a similar demographic profile and may have similar problems of social disorganization.

In this paper, we describe the changing dimensions and characteristics of poverty in the United States, focusing on the growing concentration of poverty in the inner city and related social transformations. We then discuss implications of these trends for the schools. We close with a discussion of public-policy approaches to these problems.

THE ORIGINS OF POVERTY IN THE UNITED STATES

Poverty has always been a part of American life. Even in the relatively egalitarian early years of the colonies, inheritance and marriage concentrated wealth for some, while illness, death, or other misfortunes impoverished others. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, Irish and Canadian immigrants entered this country at the bottom of the status system and were recruited into the early factories and domestic service. Later, southern and eastern Europeans, Asians, and Latin Americans took their places in the lowest stratum of American

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society. Blacks, both before and after the abolition of slavery, traditionally have been forced to the bottom of the economic hierarchy. Throughout American history, as the economic fortunes of different regions have shifted with technological change, depletion of natural resources, and changing markets, some places—and people—flourished while others were left behind. Recession and depression periodically reduced some to destitution.

The processes that create and maintain poverty—inequality, ethnic stratification, structural economic change, and the rise and fall of the business cycle—have been features of our society almost since its founding. Yet we have also seen important changes in the extent and character of poverty as well as in our response to it. Here we discuss three of those changes: economic growth and the increase in American standard of living, the rise of cities and concentration of poverty in urban slums, and the development of private charity and government programs to alleviate poverty.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the United States was primarily an agricultural nation. But beginning in the early nineteenth century, technological advances and the expansion of markets gradually led to industrialization and the mechanization of agriculture. While these processes had their costs in the displacement of craft and manual labor, by the mid-twentieth century unionization and government minimum wage levels had ensured that workers would share in the benefits of economic growth, and rising productivity eventually increased material well-being for everyone. As late as 1900, very few lived *above* the poverty line by today's standards, and the labor of children or married women was often required for families to survive economically (Patterson, 1981). The rise in wages since then has not only enhanced the standard of living for American families but has also allowed almost all children to remain in school.

Concentrated and highly visible poverty first appeared in the immigrant slums of the major eastern port cities. Social and ecological processes concentrated blacks and immigrants, as well as the native poor, in overcrowded housing near factories and other places of work. Blacks were restricted by racial discrimination to specific areas of cities. Immigrants, especially those without English language skills, clustered together to take advantage of kin support and ethnic institutions. The centralization of industry created the first urban slums, as workers sought to locate within walking distance of where they worked and more affluent families moved away from the noise and smell of the factories. Ironically, the more recent relocation of industry to suburban and exurban areas is now deepening the poverty in the urban core.

Less visible to charity workers and analysts was the poverty of economically depressed rural areas, especially in the South. Most landless and unskilled blacks and whites had to choose between exploitative sharecropping or tenancy arrangements and the miserably low wages of textile mills and other early industry. Because of widespread deprivation, child labor continued to be a problem in the South long after it was abolished in the North. It is little wonder that both blacks and whites left the rural South to seek jobs in northern cities, especially during times of economic expansion or wartime labor shortages. Sudden advances in the mechanization of agriculture in the 1850s also displaced millions of agricultural workers, many of whom headed north.

In response to increasingly visible poverty, local governments and private charities offered limited aid, sometimes institutionalizing the poor in poorhouses or asylums, sometimes providing goods or small amounts of cash as "outdoor relief." Before 1900, poor children were sometimes separated from their parents by charity workers anxious to break the cycle of poverty, or parents too poor to feed their children might have sent some of them to orphanages. Beginning in the early 1900s, states began to enact legislation providing mother's pensions (a forerunner of Aid to Families with Dependent Children) and workmen's compensation to assist families who had lost the support of a breadwinner. But even at the state level, these efforts were woefully inadequate, and during the crisis of the Great Depression, only the federal government had the resources to provide relief for the needy.

The New Deal programs of the 1930s marked the first national attempt to provide economic security for the unemployed, the elderly, the disabled, and women heading families alone. Since then the structure of the New Deal "safety net" has remained intact. Most later legislation built on its distinction between *social security,* to which all workers and their families are entitled, and means-tested *welfare,* which only certain low-income families or persons may receive. Because of these programs, dependent groups like the elderly are much less likely to be poor. However, welfare leaves an important gap: poor children in two-parent families.

Since the 1940s, standards of living have continued to improve. By 1947, when the first national estimates of poverty according to our modern definition became available, 33 percent lived under the poverty line (Fisher, 1986). Despite intermittent recessions during the 1950s, poverty fell to 22 percent of the population by 1960 and to 13 percent by 1970. At the same time, because of public programs such as Food Stamps, Medicaid, and public housing, fewer people lived in substandard housing, fewer went hungry, and fewer infants died. The War on Poverty and other government programs of the 1960s are often criticized because they failed to meet unrealistically high expectations. As we consider new directions for social policy, it is important not to neglect the gains made through these programs.

Yet even during the 1960s, a time of unprecedented affluence and activist government, poverty remained: in remote rural areas, in the growing inner-city ghettos, and elsewhere for families whose incomes were suddenly cut by divorce or unemployment. During the 1970s, formerly prosperous working-class neighborhoods were increasingly devastated by the decline of manufacturing. Progress against poverty slowed and then halted. The Social Security incomes of the elderly were protected against inflation by automatic cost-of-living adjustments, but the minimum wage, standard tax deductions, and most welfare benefits were not. Thus it is not surprising that the high inflation and sharp recessions of the early 1980s drove over 9 million more into poverty. Even the recent expansion has not fully restored the losses resulting from this sudden economic dislocation.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF POVERTY TODAY

Economic and demographic trends underlie first the stability and then this sudden rise in the poverty rate. Youth, women, and immigrants entered the labor force in increasing numbers, but the economy could not create jobs to keep pace. In addition, the long-term growth of white-collar and service employment accelerated, while the manufacturing sector was hurt by two severe recessions. Slow growth or decline in blue-collar employment has displaced many older workers, and less-educated youth now have trouble gaining access to steady work. These trends are especially severe in the industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest, which have high concentrations of blacks and Hispanics. Between 1973 and 1982, real male earnings (for those with earnings) declined by 20 percent. Median family income fell also, but not as much. The United States remains a middle-class society because people marry and have children later in life, when they are more secure economically, and because married women work.

At a time when most families need two incomes, the number of single-parent families has risen, leaving more and more children in families that are unable to support them. By 1984 close to one out of five children lived in families headed by women. Between 1970 and 1980 the percentage of families headed by females rose from 9 to 12 percent for whites and from 28 to 40 percent for blacks (Wilson and Neckerman, 1986). For many reasons, including the lower wages that women earn, the difficulty of combining work and child care, unreliable child-support payments, and low welfare benefits, children in these families are more than four times as likely as other children to be poor. In fact, since 1972, children in families headed by females have composed the majority of children in poverty.

Rising separation and divorce rates are partly responsible for these trends, but a growing proportion of single-parent families are headed by women who have never married, many of whom first gave birth as teenagers. While welfare is often blamed for the breakup of the family, as seen most recently in Charles Murray's well-known *Losing Ground* (1984), there is little scholarly support for this argument. Common-sense evidence is also against it: in the past fifteen years, the real value of welfare benefits has fallen, but the number of single-parent families continues to rise. We believe the declines in male economic status, especially among young minority men, play a role in the increasing tendency of low-income couples to delay marriage or to separate or divorce

(Wilson and Neckerman, 1986). Many young couples can no longer afford to marry, and low wages and unstable employment strain the relationships of married couples.

It is important to distinguish between short-term and long-term poverty. Poverty is usually measured on an annual basis. But longitudinal (over time) data now allow us to measure changes in individual poverty status over a period of ten or fifteen years. During the 1970s, one-fourth of all Americans were poor at least one year out of ten (Duncan, 1984). Only 2.6 percent of the population were poor eight years out of ten (Duncan, 1984), but the long-term poor make up a majority of those who are poor at any given time (Bane and Ellwood, 1986). Poverty is certain to be most serious for these long-term poor, who have exhausted their savings, who often must live in dangerous or deteriorating neighborhoods, and who are likely to feel the stigma of poverty most keenly.

The distributions of short-term and long-term poverty are very different. The long-term poor are more likely than the short-term poor to live in the South and in rural areas. Most importantly, long-term poverty is concentrated among blacks. Blacks account for only 12 percent of the total population but 62 percent of the long-term poor (Duncan, 1984). During the 1970s, the *average* black child experienced 5.5 years of poverty, compared to only 0.9 years for all other children. Black children living with only one parent or with a disabled parent were at especially high risk of long-term poverty (Duncan and Rodgers, 1985). The black child born into poverty is likely to be poor for almost ten years (Bane and Ellwood, 1986).

Why is the experience of poverty so different for white and black children? A major reason is that black children live in single-parent families much more often than white children. Currently, a third of white children and almost three out of four black children have spent some part of their childhood in non-two-parent situations; for these children, the average time in non-two-parent situations is about five years for whites and nine years for blacks (Bane and Ellwood, 1984). Black families headed by women remain poor longer because low-income black women have low marriage rates. According to a recent study of welfare, black women are almost as likely as white women to work their way off welfare, but very few leave through marriage (Bane and Ellwood, 1983). Again, the deteriorating employment prospects for minority men are likely to play a role.

Between 1969 and 1979, the poverty rate for children rose from 13.8 to 16.0 percent overall. However, there were considerable shifts in poverty in individual states and regions. The child poverty rate declined in almost all Southern states, although the South continues to have the highest incidence of poverty. In the Northeast and Great Lakes states, by contrast, poverty rates rose, and quite steeply in urban and industrial states such as New York, Michigan, and Illinois. Poverty rates were relatively stable in the "farm belt" and Mountain states but rose on the Pacific coast. In general, the fortunes of rural states improved and those of urban states declined during the 1970s. While we will have no more state-specific data on poverty until after the 1990 census, we know that the child poverty rate rose sharply after 1979 in all regions of the country. Buoyed by the success of its service economy, the Northeast appears to be recovering from the recession, although the poverty rate for children remains quite high. Conditions also appear to be improving in parts of the South and on the West Coast. The Midwest was hurt the worst—the region's child poverty rate rose from 13.0 percent in 1979 to 20.5 percent in 1984—and is recovering more slowly. Parts of the rural Midwest and West suffer from continuing problems in the agricultural and mining sectors.

There is great diversity among the states in which poor children and their families live. In some states, particularly in the South and parts of the West, poverty is mostly a rural problem. In the Northeast and industrial Midwest, by contrast, where the rural areas are more prosperous, most poor children live in the central cities of metropolitan areas. Nationally in 1979, however, 40 percent of poor children lived in central cities and 19 percent in metropolitan area suburbs, with 13 percent in small towns or cities and only 28 percent in rural areas. This represents a significant change since 1959, when a majority of poor children lived in rural areas. Both migration and economic trends contributed to this urbanization of poverty. Migration brought disadvantaged rural residents, especially blacks, to the cities of the Northeast and Midwest. When a decline in manufacturing and other blue-collar employment left many poorly educated urban residents without work, poverty rates rose faster in the cities than elsewhere. Migration of blacks and increased immigration from Latin American and Asian countries also created a more diverse and heavily minority population in the cities, and thus in the schools.

Public policies, racial segregation, and demographic trends have combined to create growing "poverty areas" within many large cities. The construction of large public-housing projects in black neighborhoods created areas of the city that were isolated by class as well as by race; income limits forced upwardly mobile residents to move out, while the poor often could not afford to live anywhere else. At the same time, the partial breakdown of racial segregation in the private-housing market made it easier for black middle- and working-class families to leave the overcrowded and decaying ghetto areas, resulting in a more highly concentrated poverty population.

CONCENTRATION EFFECTS AND THE UNDERCLASS

In the fifty largest cities in the United States, the number of persons living in poverty areas (i.e., census tracts with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent) increased by more than 20 percent from 1970 to 1980, despite a drop of 5 percent in the total population (Wilson, 1987). The increasing concentration of persons in poverty areas is most pronounced in the nation's large cities. For example, in the ten largest central cities in the nation as of 1970 (i.e., New York, Chicago, Los

Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, Houston, Baltimore, Dallas, Cleveland, and Indianapolis), the number of persons residing in poverty areas rose by 34 percent between 1970 and 1980 (from 5,574,000, or 25.7 percent of the population, to 7,484,000, or 37.1 percent of the population), including a 20 percent increase in the black population and a 66 percent climb in the Hispanic population. However, the most spectacular changes in the concentration of poverty have occurred in the extreme poverty areas (i.e., census tracts in which the poverty rate exceeds 40 percent). In these ten large cities, the total number of residents in extreme poverty areas more than doubled between 1970 and 1980 (from less than a million in 1970 to slightly more than 2 million in 1980); of these, the number of Hispanics increased threefold (from 173,000 to 516,000) and the number of blacks more than doubled (from 676,000 to 1,378,000) (Wilson et al., 1987).

This growing concentration of poverty reflects changes in the inner-city class structure and has been accompanied by increasing rates of joblessness, families headed by females, and welfare dependency. The typical inner-city neighborhood today tends to include almost exclusively the most disadvantaged segments of the urban minority population, such as families plagued by persistent poverty and welfare dependency, workers who experience long-term spells of joblessness, and individuals who are pushed into street crime and other forms of aberrant behavior because of a limited opportunity structure. One of the consequences of the exodus of middle- and working-class black families from the inner city is that these segments of the ghetto population have become more socially isolated from mainstream patterns of behavior (Wilson, 1987). By *socially isolated*, we mean that "they find themselves in a qualitatively different social and institutional environment, where the structure of social relations makes it increasingly unlikely that they will have access to those resources and channels necessary for social mobility" (Wilson et al., 1987).

The terms *social buffer* and *concentration effects* perhaps best capture the significance of the social transformation of the inner city. The former "refers to the presence of a sufficient number of working- and middle-class professional families to absorb the shock or cushion the effect of uneven economic growth and periodic recessions on inner city neighborhoods" (Wilson, 1987, p. 144). The significance of the exodus of higher-income families from the inner city is not that it removes the constraints on ghetto culture (as has been recently argued in journalistic writings about life and behavior in the inner city) but that the exodus of these families makes it "more difficult to sustain the basic institutions in the inner city (including churches, stores, schools, recreational facilities, etc.) in the face of prolonged joblessness. And as the basic institutions declined, the social organization of inner-city neighborhoods (defined here to include a sense of community, positive neighborhood identification, and explicit norms and sanctions against aberrant behavior) likewise declined" (Wilson, 1987, p. 144).

The term *concentration effects* refers to the added constraints and restricted opportunities in a neighborhood in which families and individuals are overwhelmingly socially disadvantaged in terms of access to decent jobs, availability of marriageable partners, presence of good schools and other social services, and exposure to conventional role models. Thus, in a neighborhood where there are few families with gainfully or regularly employed members, individuals tend to be isolated from the job network system that is so prevalent in other neighborhoods and that is so important in the process of learning about or being recommended for jobs in various parts of the city or metropolitan area. And as employment prospects diminish, alternative ways of obtaining an income, such as welfare and the underground economy, are increasingly relied on and, in some cases, become seen as a way of life. Moreover, because of a high jobless rate among young minority men, girls who become pregnant out of wedlock tend to give birth out of wedlock.

> The net effect is that joblessness, as a way of life, takes on a different social meaning; the relationship between schooling and post-school employment takes on a different meaning. The development of cognitive, linguistic, and other educational and job-related skills necessary for the world of work in the mainstream economy is thereby adversely affected. In such neighborhoods, therefore, teachers become frustrated and do not teach and children do not learn. A vicious cycle is perpetuated through the family, through the community, and through the schools. (Wilson, 1987, p. 57)

Poverty-area residence does not affect only the poor. Although 42 percent of Chicago's black children are poor, 71 percent live in poverty areas. In a study of Chicago, Erbe (1975) found that the typical black high-status white-collar worker (professional or managerial) lived in tracts in which only 16 percent of the residents were also high-status white-collar workers; their white counterparts lived in tracts in which 37 percent of their neighbors were professional or managerial workers. But this does not mean that low-status blacks have regular contact with higher-status blacks. Only 8 percent of the neighbors of the typical black unskilled manual laborer were professional or managerial workers, compared to 23 percent of the neighbors of white unskilled manual laborers. And since the exodus of higher-income blacks from the inner-city neighborhoods has accelerated since Erbe's study (Wilson, 1987; Wilson et al., 1987), the percentage of the black neighbors who are professional and managerial workers is now, we are sure, even lower. This is also true for Hispanics. In the ten largest cities in the United States (as of 1970), only 16 percent of all poor blacks and 23 percent of all poor Hispanics resided in nonpoor areas in 1980. By contrast, 68 percent of all poor non-Hispanic whites lived in nonpoor areas. Moreover, whereas only 14 percent of all poor non-Hispanic whites lived in the extreme poverty areas of these cities in 1980, 62 percent of all poor blacks and 53 percent of all poor Hispanics resided in such areas (Wilson et al.). Thus a control for class does not adequately reflect the differences in the environments of minority and white children.

At first, the social surroundings of the rural poor might seem worlds apart from those of the urban underclass. Residents of poor rural areas are isolated not only socially but also geographically. Distance and jurisdictional boundaries cut many off from mainstream institutions and resources—both public and private—in a way that no desegregation plan or social program can remedy. And small single-industry towns are more vulnerable to economic fluctuation than cities with diversified economies. On the other hand, the rural poor are not exposed to the high crime rates and the extremely concentrated poverty of the ghetto, nor are they confronted with the vast gulf between rich and poor living in close proximity in the city.

However, there are similarities. Both rural and inner-city poor live in economically depressed, often depopulating areas. Typically, they were left behind by the more successful or ambitious, who moved elsewhere in search of opportunity. Long-term poor in rural areas exhibit some of the same patterns of welfare dependency and economic marginality that we associate with the urban poor. Illegal ways of making money are less prevalent, although in some rural areas the presence of a military base or some other special circumstance provides a market for the "underground economy" (Williams and Kornblum, 1985). Like the socially isolated poor in the inner city, some rural poor are afraid to go far from their own communities (Auletta, 1982; Fitchen, 1981). In short, the long-term poor in rural areas—especially those in high-poverty areas, such as whites in Appalachia, blacks in the Deep South, and American Indians on reservations—may form a sort of underclass with problems similar to those found in big-city ghettos.

The social and demographic patterns characterizing both urban and rural poor areas have profound consequences for the nature of the community in which children grow up. Not only in their own families but also among their neighbors and in local institutions, there are fewer adults to support and supervise them. Table 1 (page 34) compares selected geographically representative poverty areas in large cities and poor rural counties with city populations *outside* poverty areas as well as populations in nonpoor suburbs and rural counties. The ratio of adults (aged 25 or more) to children (aged 0–17) is much lower than average in poor communities, ranging from 0.98 to 1.77 in the selected poor areas in Table 1, compared to the national figure of 2.08, and to ratios ranging from 1.66 to 3.24 in the selected nonpoor areas. In poor communities, out-migration of young adults and high fertility have shifted the balance between adults and children. Among the adults who do live in these areas, there are often more welfare recipients than college graduates; in many cases, fewer than half of all adults are employed. Where there are very high concentrations of poverty, as in the Chicago neighborhoods listed in the bottom three rows of Table 1, these characteristics are even more evident. When we consider these demographic indicators, then, it is clear that inner-city and poor rural areas have in common a deficit of adults, especially adults who are successful in mainstream society.

Table 1
Characteristics of Selected Poor and Nonpoor Areas in 1979/1980

	Poverty Rate	***Adults/ Child***	***Percent Adults Coll. Grads***	***Percent Adults Employed***	***Percent Families on Aid, '79***
Total U. S.	12.4	2.08	16.2	57.0	8.0
Poverty Areas in Atlanta, GA	38.1	1.67	8.1	48.9	24.4
Cincinnati, OH	38.6	1.77	10.8	45.2	33.4
Detroit, MI	33.0	1.68	4.9	37.5	34.0
Los Angeles, CA	30.2	1.76	9.7	53.3	22.9
Newark, NJ	39.2	1.37	5.0	44.1	36.8
Poor Rural Counties Clay Co., WV	31.8	1.55	5.2	33.4	13.5
Guadalupe Co., NM	30.5	1.55	7.3	45.0	13.4
Jasper Co., SC	29.0	1.49	7.8	53.0	19.2
Jefferson Co., MS	41.1	1.37	8.2	43.4	26.4
Sioux Co., ND	32.5	0.98	8.9	52.4	13.8
Nonpoor Areas in Boston, MA	12.5	3.24	21.8	60.6	12.8
Houston, TX	8.6	2.14	26.7	72.3	3.3
Minneapolis, MN	8.1	3.20	25.0	65.8	8.0
Nashville, TN	7.8	2.48	20.3	66.7	4.8
Salt Lake City, UT	10.6	2.34	27.1	61.3	5.6
Nonpoor Suburbs Brookside, DE	7.1	1.66	15.1	66.8	4.9*
Deer Park, NY	5.9	1.87	9.4	62.4	6.2*
Lee's Summit, MO (urban pt.)	5.2	2.19	21.9	62.0	3.0*
Littleton, CO	6.3	2.14	27.9	67.5	3.3*
Shelton, CT	3.5	2.06	18.7	64.8	3.9*
Nonpoor Rural Counties Ballard Co., KY	14.8	2.29	7.7	45.1	7.8
Lincoln Co., ME	16.7	2.28	20.3	50.9	6.7
Marquette Co., WI	11.9	2.35	8.0	48.8	8.3
Roger Mills Co., OK	15.0	2.13	10.4	55.3	4.5
Skamania Co., WA	8.8	1.90	12.3	51.1	6.6
Extreme Poverty Neighborhoods in Chicago Oakland	65.6	0.77	3.4	24.0	61.8*
Grand Boulevard	56.3	1.36	2.9	26.4	46.5*
Washington Park	49.3	1.38	2.6	32.1	43.7*

* Households, not families

SOURCES: U. S. Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of the Population*, Volume 1, *Characteristics of the Population*, General Social and Economic Characteristics, U. S. Summary and individual state volumes (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983 and 1984); and The Fact Book Consortium, *Local Community Fact Book, Chicago Metropolitan Area* (Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago, 1984).

We will now consider the implications of these developments for the schools.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE SCHOOLS

Poverty is associated with school failure—low achievement and school dropout—for reasons that are complex and still not fully understood. The research literature provides a number of partial answers. There is evidence that poorly educated parents "pass on" educational disadvantage to their children because these parents spend less time directly involved in child care, and especially in reading to children (Leibowitz, 1977; Stafford and Hill, 1974; Stafford, 1985). Class- or ethnicity-related differences in patterns of language acquisition may contribute to poor children's difficulty in the early years of school (Heath, 1982; Miller, 1982; Snow, 1982). Lack of English proficiency probably hurts many Hispanic and other language minority children in school (Steinberg et al., 1984). As poor children get older, they are much more likely to become teenage parents and to get in trouble with the law or have disciplinary problems in school—two common paths to school dropout (Ekstrom et al., 1986; Rumberger, 1983). Some research suggests that low-income minority youth expect discrimination in the job market, so they do not try to succeed in school (Ogbu, 1974); others find that inner-city youth are skeptical of the value of the education they are offered (Fine, 1986).

School practices and resources may also be related to the achievement and attainment gap between poor and nonpoor children. Some research indicates that school characteristics such as small school size, small class size, and prestige of teacher's college benefit poor, black, or low-achieving students more than other students (Winkler, 1975; Summers and Wolfe, 1977). Because of tracking and other differential treatment, poor or minority children are exposed to less-challenging instruction (Oakes, 1985). Class or ethnic tension between middle-class teachers and lower-class parents discourages parental involvement in the school (Ogbu, 1974; Mitchell, 1982; Fitchen, 1981). Finally, teachers' preconceived notions about poor children's capacity to learn may cause them to neglect these children or to provide less-effective instruction to them (Rosenthal and Jackson, 1968; Rist, 1970).

We do not fully understand the interaction of these different factors, so it is difficult to say what effect a temporary rise in poverty like that of the early 1980s has had on school failure. To the extent that relatively stable factors such as parents' education or class background are important to school success, fluctuation in the poverty rate probably is not that important. Indeed, bad labor-market conditions could counteract the effect of rising poverty on school dropouts, since teenagers have less incentive to drop out of school and seek work (Lerman, 1972; Duncan, 1974; Edwards, 1976). However, it is certainly possible that a temporary rise in poverty may hurt school performance, especially when accompanied by cuts in social programs. As one indicator of standard of living, hunger had been virtually eliminated by the 1970s, but it reappeared in the wake of the recessions of the 1980s and the cuts in Food Stamp and nutrition programs (Brown, 1987). A quarter of Chicago families surveyed in the fall of 1983 reported that at some point during the past year, they had not had enough money to buy groceries (Cook et al., 1984). At least one study has shown that family income by itself may make some difference in success in school (Maynard and Murnane, 1979).

The limited evidence we have indicates that test scores of poor and minority children improved during the 1970s and early 1980s. On almost all National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests given over the decade, blacks either gained more than whites or lost less. The NAEP presents no statistics by family income, but according to indicators such as parental education, reading material in the home, and size/type of community, it appears that children from low-status families have improved relatively more on reading tests. For instance, the proportion of third-graders reading at a "basic" level increased from 41 percent in 1970–71 to 49 percent in 1983–84 for children of high-school dropouts, while remaining steady at about 74 percent for children of parents with postsecondary education (NAEP, 1985). School completion rates also improved during the 1960s and early 1970s for both black and white youth, although male dropout rates rose again during the mid-to-late 1970s. It is too soon to know what the legacy of the 1980s, with its sharp rise in poverty and its cuts in social programs, will be.

The long-term changes in the character of poverty we discussed earlier—increasing numbers of single-parent families and concentration of poverty—may ultimately have more serious consequences for the schools than do these cyclical fluctuations in poverty. These developments have altered the social environment in which poor children grow up. They have changed the composition of inner-city schools, which increasingly are characterized by race and class isolation. And finally, the concentration of the poor in central cities, in the political and fiscal climate of the 1980s, has strained the finances of many big-city school systems. Each of these may be expected to have adverse consequences for the schools. We will review the evidence concerning them.

It is clear that the material and demographic conditions for social organization in the inner city are deteriorating. Because of economic shifts and the flight of middle-class and working-class residents, many of these communities are again as desperately poor as they were in the 1940s and 1950s, before the gains of the civil rights movement and the Great Society. Now, however, they lack the social and institutional stability that class heterogeneity provided during those decades. There are fewer adults, and especially fewer working adults, to maintain community institutions, link children to the labor market and mainstream society, and exercise informal social control.

We understand little of the effects of this social transformation, but some evidence suggests that these changes contribute to problems such as early parenthood and juvenile delinquency. Low-income teenage girls whose parents supervise them less are at greater risk of pregnancy; parental supervision tends to be less strict among families who live in ghetto neighborhoods. Girls who grow up in families headed by females are also more likely to become teenage parents (Hogan and Kitagawa, 1985). A study of teenage fathers found that inner-city youth tend to have large amounts of unsupervised time, often with an empty apartment to go to during the day (Sullivan, 1985).

Changes in family structure and community are also linked to youth crime. Some argue that economic decline and family instability undermine social organization and social control, reducing the extent to which residents of a community monitor both the presence of outsiders and the activities of their own children (McGahey, 1986; Reiss, 1986; Sampson, 1987). Poverty itself is not necessarily related to weak social organization: Sullivan (1983) found that the men of a poor white neighborhood severely disciplined youth they found committing petty crimes in the area. However, this sort of social control may break down when men are less attached to families and to local economic enterprise, and thus have less of a stake in maintaining order. McGahey writes: "Impoverished communities are not without resources for social control, but their resources seem to vary directly with the amount and type of legitimate employment available to adults who reside in the community" (1986, p. 253). Some empirical evidence links the prevalence of families headed by females to higher rates of youth crime, although it is not clear whether it is socialization in the family or social control in the community that is important (Sampson, 1987; Loury, 1985). Finally, some poor urban neighborhoods have an organized structure of criminal activities, managed mostly by adults, who recruit local youth into the network.

Changes in family and community may also be linked directly to school achievement or attainment. Some argue that parents' behavior—for example, monitoring children's homework and encouraging their progress in school—is more important to school achievement than is family structure per se (Clark, 1983). However, it is certainly true that single parents have less time to spend with their children. The importance of an adult presence in the home is shown in one study by the fact that young children from mother-grandmother families in a poor black neighborhood did almost as well in school as children in mother-father families; children from mother-alone families were rated lower by their teachers than children from the other two types of families (Kellam et al., 1977). Children in families headed by females drop out of school more often than children from two-parent families, even when economic status is maintained (McLanahan, 1985).

When family support for education is weak, the community becomes more important. Coleman and Hoffer argue that one reason Catholic schools are more effective is because parents, students, and teachers are embedded in a religious community, not incidentally one of the few remaining sources of community that includes both adults and children: "A school with a strong supporting adult community can impose greater academic demands on its students . . . It can impose stricter disciplinary standards" (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987). In addition to the relationships between school and parents, the attention and help youth get from other adult "mentors" in the community may be critical (Williams and Kornblum, 1985). In a ghetto neighborhood, youth peer groups also become more influential and may undermine commitment to school. Longitudinal data show that ". . . adolescents tend to follow the lead of their closest associates in the decision to remain in school or to drop out" (Social Development Laboratory, 1987, p. 14).

Finally, the loss of retail and service establishments from economically depressed neighborhoods deprives poor youth of local part-time employment opportunities that are compatible with school schedules. Without these opportunities, as McGahey (1986) points out, youth must choose between income and school; and when family income is inadequate, it is not surprising that many leave school and enter the legal and/or underground economy.

As city demographics have changed and school desegregation efforts are stalled, inner-city schools have become increasingly racially and economically isolated. Although this question is still controversial, there is some evidence that children benefit from attending schools of higher socioeconomic status (Winkler, 1975). In one study, children of low or average achievement benefited from being in a higher-achieving school, while students scoring above grade level were not affected (Summers and Wolfe, 1977). These studies are consistent with the results of other literature on school desegregation. When children have moved from inner-city schools to suburban schools, their educational outcomes generally improve. In one study (Crain, n.d.), black children in Hartford, Connecticut, randomly selected for busing to suburban schools had slightly higher rates of school completion, even though some dropped out of the program or did not attend suburban schools for very long. In the Gautreaux program in Chicago, in which black families from inner-city housing projects moved to suburban neighborhoods, children faced higher academic standards (and some were placed back a grade or put in special-education programs), yet overall their grades did not drop; most were able to respond to a more challenging environment (Rosenbaum, 1986). Other case studies of desegregated schools find that in most cases minority school achievement rises, while white achievement is at least stable (Hawley et al., 1983). When the reverse occurs—when children attend schools that are increasingly segregated by class as well as race—their achievement would be expected to decline.

Graduating from a ghetto school may also hurt black students in the eyes of employers and higher-education personnel (Crain, 1984). Portes and Wilson (1976) observe, "Black grades, especially those from all-black high schools, appear to be more irrelevant as marks of achievement within the schools themselves and as criteria of selection for higher education. Institutional administrators seem to do so much 'discounting' of the value of inner-city and other black school grades as to render their importance for admission almost nil." Thus grades have a concrete payoff for whites and for blacks from mostly white settings, but not for blacks from black schools. Higher-status or integrated schools may also give blacks contacts in the job market and experience in negotiating racially integrated social settings (Braddock and McPartland, 1983).

Undoubtedly, one reason that schools in poor neighborhoods are often less effective is the quality and morale of the teaching staff. Schools in poor neighborhoods often get the less-experienced and less-qualified teachers; the senior teachers can get assigned elsewhere (Owen, 1972; Summers and Wolfe, 1976). The teachers who remain often find it a dangerous and demoralizing environment, and many "vote with their feet." In Chicago, teacher absenteeism is highest in the ghetto schools. Each year the district hires hundreds of substitutes who, even when they are well qualified, cannot maintain the same continuity of instruction as the regular teachers. Students, too, find poor schools dangerous and frustrating, and many schools tolerate widespread cutting of classes as long as students are present for the homeroom period. It is easy for a pattern of truancy to slip into dropout or expulsion.

Because schools rely so heavily on local funding, school resources are highly sensitive to the wealth of the community. Central-city economic declines and the flight of middle-class families to the suburbs have reduced the resources available to central-city school districts. Tax receipts have fallen as the income of city residents has declined. Like so many inner-city problems, this one has a self-perpetuating quality: the concentration of poverty discourages business from locating in the central city, thereby depriving inner-city residents of jobs, reinforcing poverty and its attendant problems, and further reducing tax receipts and city services.

In the past decade, these demographic and economic trends have been accompanied by cuts in federal and state aid to cities and schools. During the late 1970s, tax revolts limited state revenues and restricted state aid to education in some states. In the early 1980s the Reagan administration mounted a partly successful assault on federal education and urban-aid programs. Major urban-aid programs such as General Revenue Sharing were eliminated or greatly reduced in scope. Chapter 1 (formerly Title 1) funds for low-income schools were reduced—in 1985 Chapter 1 funding was 20 percent below what it would have been under fiscal year 1981 policies, and most states and localities did not replace these funds (Palmer and Sawhill, 1984).

CONCLUSIONS: A POLICY RESPONSE

The concentration of poverty is a long-term development rooted in economic and demographic trends of the past several decades. Even if the poverty rate returns to the level of the 1970s, the concentration of poverty and the problems it causes for schools will not be reversed. The social transformation of the inner city, the race and class isolation of the schools, and the weakened fiscal condition of big-city school systems are all problems that require public-policy action. In fact, some public policies have exacerbated these problems. For instance, high-rise public housing anchors low-income and racially isolated ghettos. Magnet schools drain away the brighter and higher-status students, leaving behind schools that are even more isolated.

We must begin by emphasizing that our discussion of concentration effects and social isolation does not imply an endorsement of a community "self-help" approach to solving the problems of the ghetto. The ghetto does not have the material resources to do that, nor does the minority population as a whole. Nor will a top-down federal effort to promote community development be effective, if the experience of the Community Action Program of the 1960s is to be believed.

This is not to say that people working at the local level should not seek to foster community organization. Indeed, it is striking how many successful education and employment programs consciously seek to reproduce the informal networks that support children and young adults in getting through school and finding work. In doing so, they provide not only material assistance but also social support, for surely having adults take an interest in children is a major part of their success. Eugene Lang's famous effort is a good example—not only did he promise to finance college educations (which the government itself sometimes does), he also opened his door to the students he promised to support, giving advice, helping them visit colleges, and so on as they struggled to finish school.

However, while a community-based approach may be useful or even necessary to reach a disadvantaged population, it is surely not sufficient. We must address the public and private practices that sustain the concentration of poverty. Clusters of high-rise housing create poor neighborhoods and poor schools, and discriminatory real-estate practices and a limited supply of low-rent housing keep low-income families trapped in these poverty areas. When poor and minority families gain greater access to housing in other neighborhoods, we must intervene in the destructive process of racial change and ghettoization, using what we have learned about ways to stabilize racially changing neighborhoods. We must also curb practices like redlining and arson and more subtle disinvestment in poor neighborhoods, and support community economic development efforts.

But we must also provide assistance directly to families that need it most. Single-parent families are a majority of all poor families. They need much stronger child-support laws and more active enforcement. Child care and medical insurance will help single mothers get off welfare and into the job market; in fact, workfare cannot succeed unless child care and health care are assured through public or private means. Many women need basic skills and job training in order to get any but the most menial jobs. Finally, more adequate income support is necessary for poor families—both single-parent and two-parent. A variety of alternatives are possible, including tax deductions, welfare reform, and child or family allowances.

Of particular importance for disadvantaged youth, we feel, is intervention at the point of transition from school to work. Minority teenagers have the highest unemployment rate of any group, and for many, teenage unemployment is the start of a long career of unstable work and perhaps welfare dependency or crime. Those who remain jobless find it increasingly difficult to get back into the job market without skills or work experience. They and their children become the next generation of long-term poor. Before joblessness becomes self-perpetuating, they need training in basic and vocational skills and opportunities for meaningful work—not dead-end, low-paying jobs. For those still in school, we should be forging formal and informal links between schools and workplaces to motivate youth to stay in school. For those who drop out because of pregnancy, arrest, or lack of interest, we should provide flexible alternatives when they are ready to return, perhaps helping them combine school and work.

In the meantime, educators must continue to investigate and experiment with effective ways to teach poor children. The schools cannot simply wait for poverty to be alleviated. In fact, education is an essential part of any lasting "solution" to the problem of poverty, although education by itself will not be the answer. Up to half of all ghetto children never complete high school, and increasingly we hear that even those who graduate from inner-city high schools are unemployable. Poverty will remain as long as most who attend school in our poorest communities reach adulthood without the means to enter the economic mainstream.

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RACE, INCOME, AND EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

Students and Schools At Risk in the 1980s

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INTRODUCTION

Americans believe that schools have power to solve basic problems and that very important goals for our society and our economy can be accomplished through reforms in the schools. We see equal educational opportunity as a way to rectify extreme differences in a society committed to a fair chance for all. Surveys show that even those at the bottom in American society have a very deep faith in the public schools and see them as the key to a better life for their children. The way educational leaders describe the problems and possibilities of achieving opportunity through our schools is very important in shaping our vision of social possibilities.

Each wave of educational reform has its own goals and its own vision of school problems and of the kinds of schools it wishes to change. Developing policy with different kinds of schools in mind leads to very different perceptions and policies. Major changes in school policies can change access to opportunity for large groups in American society. The large policy changes of recent years were not intended to change access, but they have probably narrowed it because of their failure to recognize and deal with the special problems confronting minority and low-income children in the nation's schools. In its great concentration on increasing individual achievement in the schools, the excellence movement seems to have lost sight of the massive evidence produced in the last generation about minority and low-income children, particularly when they dominate entire schools and face not only individual problems but also systemic inequalities within American public education.

This study examines the tension between dramatic changes in the social composition of American public schools and the sharp increases in educational standards enacted during the reform movements of the 1980s. School enrollments since the 1960s reflect the shrinking white majority among American young people and the rapidly increasing multiracial population. Since the 1960s a growing proportion of young people in the United States are nonwhite, poor, and living in single-parent homes that face social and economic crisis.

Although the reformers had no intention of reducing opportunity for minority and poor children, the reforms were not developed with their problems in mind and may well have hurt those students who were already having great difficulty in less competitive schools. The two trends are likely to clash in damaging ways, in part because very little thought was given to the special needs of disadvantaged students as the new reform policies emerged in the last eight years. This is true not only of reforms devised in state capitals but also of those implemented a few years earlier by the leaders of many big-city school systems. Both city and state school officials were reacting to the same political and intellectual trends created by the back-to-the-fundamentals and the effective-schools movements in education and a more general conservative political movement.

As we now begin to see the actual consequences of various reforms, evidence is accumulating of a serious mismatch between some of the policy changes and the educational needs of minority and low-income students. Leaders must consider both the great changes in the background of the school-age population and the very limited degree to which educational improvement for severely disadvantaged students and schools can be accomplished simply by raising the barriers to educational advancement for those who often failed to make it over the old ones.

Educational leaders need to rethink and redirect policy to reach low-income and nonwhite students more effectively and to help them move into the educational mainstream. After a period of strong reaction to some of the excesses of the 1960s reforms, it is crucial to recapture the positive lessons of the equity policies of that era. A concern with excellence and higher aspirations is perfectly appropriate as part of this policy, but it should not be a goal expressed primarily through erecting higher barriers. We must be particularly careful to assess the consequences of barrier-raising policies and end those that produce few gains but have large costs. Focus must be on the incentives and assistance that make it possible for students to reach the goals.

A more successful policy will require raising sensitive questions about inequalities within state and local educational systems. It will require moving beyond decisions to raise requirements to consideration of needed changes in educational institutions. Even beyond that, we may be entering a time when educational leaders will need to learn how to speak out about social policy issues that obviously have damaging effects on the capacity of the growing proportion of poor children to function in school.

DIVERSITY WITHIN A UNIVERSAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The American system of public education has a rhetoric of universalism and common schools for all, but it produces schools with completely different educational worlds. Each of these very different schools has its own problems, and none ever has enough money to do everything it aims to accomplish. Usually, however, policymakers are thinking primarily about one basic kind of school in devising a new policy approach, even though they may apply the new policy to all schools. The school in the mind of the policymaker becomes the lens through which the policy is discussed and its results evaluated.

During the 1960s school policy debates focused on the image of schools failing the poor or keeping out children who could benefit from and had a right to better schooling. In the early 1980s the excellence movement shifted the focus to the most typical American school—that in the middle-class suburb. The ideal of the public school as the key to equal opportunity has given way to the image of the school as the training ground for success in a more competitive and more technological world. The issues of the 1960s have been displaced by concerns like those of the 1950s, when the Soviet Sputnik placed another kind of scientific challenge at the center of educational reform.

The second wave of the 1980s policy debate includes an after-the-fact effort to think about the implications of the reforms of the early 1980s for the schools that are the least successful. After a period in which it was fashionable to assume that schools could be changed by command from above and that all schools could and would respond to the same commands, there is a resurgence of interest in understanding the problems of minority and low-income schools.

This paper is primarily about the schools and the students at the bottom of the educational status system in the 1980s, about the children now called "at-risk" and the schools that serve them. (The term "at-risk" has replaced earlier terms such as "poor," "culturally deprived," "educationally disadvantaged," and "unconstitutionally segregated." It is a kind of blameless 1980s-style term that suggests that it just happened that some students are in danger of dropping out and that no one is responsible for the problem. This term suggests that the problems are individual ones; the old terms spoke of systemic problems affecting entire groups.)

This paper's focus is primarily on metropolitan America, home to 77 percent of the nation's people in 1985; but similar issues are present in many smaller cities and rural areas—particularly in the South and the Southwest, where minority populations are substantial, even outside the metropolitan areas.

The reformers of the early 1980s intended no harm to the minority and low-income children who make up so large a portion of the at-risk students, but they much too simply assumed that whatever would be good for the suburban students would also help their central-city and poor rural counterparts. Too often they ignored the fact that in a society profoundly fragmented by race and income, policies that work for one type of school may often misfire in or even do harm to other schools. Schools differing in fundamental ways will almost certainly be affected differently by the same policy.

TWO FAMILIES, TWO SCHOOLS, TWO WORLDS

A useful way to begin to explore the dilemmas of school reform is to think about the concerns of two suburban and inner-city families about their schools. Although both families may have very similar dreams for their children and both view schools as centrally important, there are striking differences. The concerns of the parents of Scott and Elizabeth Elliott, students at Richville Township High School, are fundamentally different from the concerns of the Hernandez family about Ricardo, José, and Maria Isobel, who attend Chavez High in the big city *barrio*.

The Elliotts are pleased that their children are attending a school that is among the most highly ranked in the metropolitan area, a school where almost everyone graduates and from which 92 percent of the graduates go on to college. This certainly does not mean, however, that the Elliotts do not have serious worries. They and their children and their friends in the community all put great emphasis on what kind of college their children will go to, and there is tremendous pressure to win entry into the most selective and prestigious institutions. The Elliotts pressure both the school and their children for preparation that will make success in this competition possible. They are worried about reports of drugs and drinking by some of the students and about the terrifying risks of teen sex in a time of herpes and AIDS. They think that the writing and lab science courses are not taught rigorously enough.

The Hernandez family has worries that would seem almost incomprehensible in most suburban communities. At Chavez High, 65 percent of the boys and 45 percent of the girls do not graduate. Last month the family went to a funeral mass for one of Ricardo's friends, who was killed by a gang. It was not the first one. They are worried that Jose is hanging around too much with the wrong kind of friends. The girl next door just dropped out of school to have a baby. Mr. Hernandez lost his long-time job three years ago when the steel mill closed, and he does not have enough education to get more than menial work at much lower wages. He constantly tells his children that they must finish school.

The Hernandez parents put all their hopes in the school. They have no alternative. They cannot move to the suburbs. They have no money for parochial schools. They dream that their three children will graduate and go to college and get a good job in computer science, medical technology, or some other field in which they can make secure white-collar incomes. The parents, who have only grade-school educations and limited knowledge of English, know little about the school, but they try to support it and tell their children to do the work. They wish they had the money for the big dances and for better clothes to make the children proud. Ricardo and Maria are doing as well as their friends and they hope that is enough to go to college. They do not know anyone who has actually graduated from college, although there is a girl on the block in the community college now. They do not know how they can ever pay for college. In the suburbs, college is a clear and sharply focused reality. For the Hernandez family, it is over the rainbow.

Mr. and Mrs. Hernandez talk to each other constantly about the many children in the neighborhood who are turning out badly. They pray that somehow things will work out if only their children can graduate. Sometimes they even talk about going back to Puerto Rico, where things are less dangerous in school, but there they would face greater economic hardship and find few colleges.

When one visits both high schools, the differences are instantly apparent. The suburban school, built in the late 1950s, is perfectly maintained, with large and ample grounds, many specialized activities in its underutilized building, and an atmosphere of purposeful activity and quiet order. There is a two-story learning center with thousands of well-displayed books and an impressive array of computer equipment at the heart of the building.

Chavez, originally Seward High, was built in the 1880s and has clearly seen better days. It has never been so overcrowded. There are 3,000 students in a school built for 1,800 and classes are going on in temporary buildings in the playground. The central-city school district has been in financial crisis for a decade, with three major teachers' strikes, and there has been no money for more than emergency maintenance. The building has flaking paint and leaking roofs, and it is grimy from deferred cleaning. Part of the old library is now used as a classroom, and there has been little money for buying or cataloging books for years. In fact, many of the regular textbooks in the school have been used too many times and are falling apart.

The city and the suburban schools have teachers from different colleges. They offer different mixes of courses and very different levels of competition. The teachers in the city schools are mostly from the city's own teacher-training institution, now called a state university, while the suburban teachers come from a wide range of much more competitive colleges, and most have advanced degrees. There are more counselors in Richville Township, where the students already have good sources of information about college. The college prep courses are offered less often and at a much less competitive level in Chavez, which lacks physics and calculus classes altogether and which offers no Advanced Placement training. More than 90 percent of the Richville students take college placement exams, often after taking practice tests and special preparation tests. Less than a tenth of the students at Chavez take the exams.

If a student went from his suburban class in Richville to the same class at Chavez, it would seem like a different world. Often, none of the city students would be doing work up to the level of less successful suburban students. The Chavez valedictorian would have trouble passing a nonhonors course at Richville Township.

Chavez High received some assistance and some additional burdens from the reforms of the 1960s; it faces special difficulties with the policy changes of the 1980s. It never got much compensatory education money, since that money was targeted for basic-skills instruction in early elementary grades. No major high-school compensatory education program has ever been enacted. Most of the students speak English. Those who do not, mostly recent immigrants, do receive some special help from the bilingual education program, but there is less money in that program than there was ten years ago. A few students benefited from a special college-readiness program to prepare Chavez students for college, but that program was shut down. A limited local desegregation plan created three magnet high schools in the city that offer much better college preparation, but admission procedures are complex and few Chavez students and parents negotiate them successfully. Most families at Chavez do not realize that their children will not be prepared for college by the normal Chavez curriculum. The poverty program and the CETA jobs program once provided assistants to the librarians and other school staff, but the last of those people lost their jobs in mid-1981, when the program ended.

The state legislature appropriated $5 million for dropout prevention for the entire state last year, and Chavez has received $30,000 to hire one staff member to deal with the almost 1,800 students the school has identified as at risk of dropping out. It appears that funding for the dropout program will last only one year.

No new high schools have been built in the city for fifteen years, and it looks as if the Chavez students have nothing but the old building and temporary classrooms to look forward to for the indefinite future. There is talk about putting the school on year-round sessions, something that has already been done with overcrowded Hispanic schools in several other cities.

The reforms adopted by the state legislature in 1983 have affected both schools. The increased graduation requirements in science and mathematics required the hiring of two new teachers at Richville. Sufficient courses already existed to program nearly all students into classes meeting the requirements for the first year of the reform. Sixty percent of the suburban students already had programs that met the requirements even before they were enacted. The new state basic-skills exam was passed on the first try by 95 percent of the Richville students, many of whom ridiculed it as a grade-school test. None of the newly hired Richville teachers failed the state's new teacher-competency test. The additional state funds provided for teacher salaries by the reform law have permitted a handsome raise for local teachers and paid all the new costs except for some of the extensive testing.

At Chavez High the reforms have caused a crisis that threatens to become worse. There are no physics teachers, and the faculty lacks appropriately certified teachers to offer the required added sections of lab science, computer training, mathematics, and foreign language needed to meet new graduation and college entrance requirements, which will be fully operative by 1988. If the school officials admitted the truth, it would be clear that there is almost no real precollegiate writing instruction in the school. English department members privately laugh at the idea of requiring research papers from students who lack a basic knowledge of grammar, mechanics, and spelling. If the state adopts the proposed writing requirement for graduation, many Chavez students will surely fail. Two probationary teachers at Chavez—two of the only five Hispanic teachers on the staff—have failed the new state teacher exam. Very few new Hispanic teachers were certified in the entire state this year. Hispanic enrollment in teacher training is plummeting, in part because of the high failure rate of minority students taking the new exam.

Chavez High lacks not only teachers and courses, but also physical facilities to support the new requirements. There are not enough labs, and the equipment in those that exist is severely out-of-date. Most of the teachers and administrators in the school think that the new requirements make no sense.

The principal of Chavez and her district superintendent know that they are going to be judged by the percentage of students passing the mandatory state graduation exams. That percentage will be published in the newspapers, will appear in all the school district's personnel files, and will be a central issue for community activists. In response, the principal and staff have decided to put tremendous emphasis on the basic skills measured in the test and on test-taking skills in general. This will mean putting even less emphasis on the higher-order skills so essential to college work. They have also decided to hold down the failure rate at upper grade levels by retaining more low-achieving students in previous grades. The retention rate at Chavez is now 23 percent. In other words, 23 of every 100 students fail their grade and are not promoted. Many fail two or more grades during high school. There are, in fact, many eighteen-year-olds who are still being tested as tenth-graders, making the school's test scores appear higher and holding down the failure rate on the twelth-grade degree test.

All this does not come without cost, of course. In addition to the time lost, there is an extremely strong relationship between being held back in grade and failing to graduate. In Chavez, 78 percent of those who fail one or more grades drop out before graduation. Last year the dropout rate increased significantly. Since the school is being held accountable for test scores but not for dropouts, an increased dropout rate that removes low-achieving students will actually make the school look more successful.

As the state universities implement their new entrance requirements, enrollment of Chavez graduates in four-year public colleges in the area has fallen. Colleges are doing less recruiting at Chavez.

This tale of Chavez and Richville Township high schools is not just a story. It reflects real differences appearing in a number of recent and current studies of education in metropolitan areas. Much of it is based on detailed studies of the schools, neighborhoods, and colleges in metropolitan Chicago and other urban centers (Orfield and Tostado, 1983; Orfield, Mitzel, et al., 1984; Paul, 1987; Garrett, 1987; Espinosa and Ochoa, 1986). The picture is more complex, of course, but the differences between typical suburban and inner-city minority schools are dramatic. Some suburban schools are significantly less successful than Richville, but there are almost none in large metropolitan areas that are not far more successful than almost all inner-city black and Hispanic schools.

Chavez could have been a black school. In that case it would probably not have been overcrowded and would not have had bilingual programs. Its students, however, would have been even poorer on average, more segregated, and much less likely to have intact families. Their scores and dropout rates would have been similar to, and perhaps slightly better than, those of the Hispanic students.

THE STRATIFICATION OF SCHOOLS

The underlying pattern of school differences is deep and structural. Wherever one looks, there are strong and disconcerting relationships between race, income, and every aspect of schooling. The relationships are so powerful that they enable reliable prediction of the school's test scores without any information at all about the educational program in the school or the school district. Data from the entire state of California and from the Chicago, Milwaukee, and Los Angeles metropolitan areas and a forthcoming study of metropolitan Atlanta schools all show strong relationships between race, income, and achievement.

If a school has a high proportion of blacks and Hispanics, it is very likely that the school has a high proportion of poor people. There are extremely few low-income white schools in metropolitan America. There are very few black and Hispanic schools without a substantial proportion of poor children. It may well be the low-income background of the students, not their racial background, that is most closely related to the inequalities in school performance. Which factor is more important, however, makes little practical difference since poverty and race are so strongly related. In metropolitan America the schools that are poor are almost always minority schools.

A statewide study of more than 5,000 California schools by San Diego State University researchers showed clear relationships between race, poverty, and academic achievement in the late 1970s. More than two-thirds of black and Hispanic third-graders were in schools with test scores below the national norms. Two-thirds of Hispanics and three-fourths of blacks were in predominantly minority schools. The typical Hispanic student in metropolitan Los Angeles was in a 78 percent minority school. (By 1984 the figure was 83 percent.)

Black and Hispanic students were many times more likely to be in the schools with the lowest test scores. The lowest quartile of California schools, ranked by test scores, was 67 percent black and Hispanic and had only 28 percent white students. The top fourth of the schools, in contrast, was 85 percent white, 7 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent black. By grade three, about five of every six black and Hispanic students were in below-average schools, while 60 percent of whites were in school systems with above-average high schools. By the high-school senior year, even after a large fraction of the minority students had dropped out, 75 percent of Hispanics and 79 percent of blacks but only a third (36 percent) of whites were still concentrated in schools with below-average scores.

There were strong statistical relationships between race and achievement levels, but the study found that some other commonly mentioned sources of inequality were not significant. At both the sixth- and twelfth-grade levels, for example, the Hispanic schools spending more per student tended to perform worse, probably because the federal compensatory education program concentrated spending in schools with large poverty populations. This does not mean that the funds did not help; it merely means that they were not sufficient to offset the very large problems confronting schools with high concentrations of Hispanic children. The statistic is deeply disturbing for those who argue that simply redistributing funds will solve the problem of inequality.

The study found significant relationships between school test scores and the social, economic, and welfare status of students (Espinosa and Ochoa, 1986, pp. 77–94). On its most basic level, the study found that students from minority backgrounds were already highly segregated in low-achieving schools by the third grade and most were never offered a reasonable level of competitive precollegiate training at any stage.

Two analyses of the schools in metropolitan Milwaukee concluded that there were very strong relationships between race, poverty, and academic achievement. Professor Daniel P. Walsh examined statistics on 138 schools from districts with 61,000 students in the city and suburbs. The second- and fifth-grade students were tested with the Iowa Test, and the results showed a .70 correlation between elementary-school test scores and percent of low-income students. This extremely strong relationship was even clearer in middle and high schools. There was also a relationship, independent of poverty, between location of school district and students' academic achievement. Students from central-city districts did worse than those from suburban districts (Walsh, 1986, pp. 78–85).

Poor people were concentrated in the city, and there was a strong relationship between percentage poor and percentage minority in metropolitan Milwaukee schools. Fifty-seven percent of the city's schools, but only one school in the suburbs, had more than one-fourth poor children. There were four times as many poor children in the typical city school as in its suburban counterpart.

Much of the greater success of the Milwaukee magnet schools, according to Walsh, was due not to their outstanding programs but to their recruitment and screening of students. The correlation between the test scores and the percentage of low-income students was −.74. In other words, although each of these special schools had to have at least 44 percent minority pupils, the students getting through the screening were very unlikely to be poor (Walsh, pp. 86–87). The schools scored well on tests primarily because they were enrolling students from families with stronger economic and educational backgrounds, not because they were transforming urban education. Magnet schools in other large cities tend also to have relatively few low-income students.

Another more detailed study of the Milwaukee area, by University of Wisconsin professor John Witte, looked explicitly at the question of race. Witte, who directed a large study of schools in the metropolitan area for the state government, concluded a detailed statistical analysis:

> . . . The differences in educational achievement in the city and the suburbs, and between racial and economic groups, are extreme. . . . poor minority students in the city leave the public education system (often prior to graduation) with little to look forward to either in terms of further education or jobs. On the other hand, middle class

> white suburban students almost all complete school with a range of higher education opportunities available to them. (Witte, 1986, p. 25)

Detailed studies of Chicago schools by Designs for Change, a local advocacy group, and the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance (CPPS) have demonstrated an extremely strong relationship within the city between a school's percentage of minority students and its graduation rates and test scores. In tracing the educational fate of students attending various kinds of schools, researchers at Designs for Change (1985) found that only one in every six students who started out in the ninth grade in the city schools ended up graduating and achieving at or above national norm levels four years later. The CPPS researchers found a direct statistical relationship between the percentage of minority students in schools and the dropout rates, except for the selective magnet and specialty programs (Chicago Panel, 1985).

A 1984 analysis of the high schools in metropolitan Chicago found that almost all suburban high schools had fewer low-income students than almost all Chicago schools, and that the city schools had teachers with fewer years of education from far less selective colleges and offered much more limited counseling. (The *High School and Beyond* survey showed counseling to have a much greater influence on minority students' plans, probably because white families already had much more information about colleges.) Within Chicago the high-school curriculum was far more limited at the low-income, high-minority schools. There was a direct feeder system connecting high schools and community colleges, and the minority high schools fed into the metropolitan area's least successful two-year colleges, from which very few students ever graduated or transferred to institutions giving B.A. degrees (Orfield, Mitzel, et al., 1984).

A 1987 analysis of the 193 high schools in the Chicago metro area showed very strong relationships between race, income, and achievement. There were dramatic differences in graduation rates, in percentages taking college admissions tests, and in college test scores, and all of these were related to the racial and economic differences. Racial differences between schools were very closely linked to economic differences. All schools with the highest ratings were middle class and almost entirely white, while those at the other extreme were virtually all minority and predominantly poor (Garrett, 1987).

An ambitious effort to look at these relationships over time is the Jaeger study over ten years of the change in schools in the greater Los Angeles area. Because state officials have carefully collected and maintained records and the same types of standardized forms have been required, it is possible to follow changes in schools and regions with great clarity. These data show a high level of segregation and a strong association between the percentage of minority students and the percentage of low-income students, although these relationships are less extreme than in the Chicago data. There is a striking gap in the achievement levels and the graduation rates within the four-county area, which contains about a twentieth of the nation's population and almost a fifth of the

Hispanic students in United States public schools. The gaps did not decline during the 1975–1985 period in spite of local and state programs targeting reform at the elementary-school level (Jaeger, 1987). (This study did not evaluate the later reforms enacted under Superintendent Bill Honig.)

This description of educational inequalities could go on and on. One of the consequences of the state reform movement in many states will be the release of much more standardized data that will permit comparison of city and suburban schools. The data that have now been released in metropolitan Houston and metropolitan Philadelphia, for example, show very large differences. Most of the weakest schools identified in the entire state of New York are in inner-city areas of New York City.

When the data from the excellence reforms are merged with data on the racial composition of schools—something that is almost never done by state governments—it is possible to show much more clearly than ever before the pattern of deep and persistent racial differences. Although we do not like to talk about it, it is true that if you grow up black or brown in one of the nation's great central cities, you will almost surely attend an inferior school, regardless of your own intelligence and motivation. Unless your family can afford private schools or a move to the suburbs (and is not blocked by discrimination in the housing market), the probability is extremely high that you will attend schools with inferior levels of competition and teaching. Since research shows that the way a teacher teaches changes as the proportion of low-income students in his or her class increases, it is also likely that another powerful influence in the schools, teacher expectation, is related to the economic differences between the inner-city and suburban schools (Barr and Dreeben, 1983). Teachers with more poor students expect and demand less. Minority schools have more low-income students.

If the schools offered to the 29 percent of American families who live in central cities are consistently unequal to those provided the 48 percent of families who live in suburban areas and if the vast majority of nonwhite students continue to attend declining central city schools, then a major inequity will be compounded if state governments adopt policies that have the effect of penalizing central-city students for the inferior schools they attend without addressing any of the underlying causes of the inequalities or providing the additional help needed in such schools.

THE INCREASING PROPORTION OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

The reforms of the early and mid-1980s were addressed most directly to the problems of middle-class students, a group that was already doing quite well in American schools and that is a shrinking fraction of the total student body. The most rapidly growing groups are those that were experiencing the greatest difficulties even before the standards were raised. Between 1980 and mid-1985, the United States white population increased 4.2 percent, blacks increased 8.2 percent, and the number of Hispanics shot up 22 percent. About half of the nation's population growth came from immigration during this period (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-23, No. 150, pp. 4–5).

From 1968, when the federal government began collecting national racial statistics on public schools, until the 1986–87 school year, the proportion of whites declined sharply among students in American public schools, while the proportion of blacks increased slightly and the fraction of Hispanics doubled. The rate of change during this sixteen-year period could lead to a national public school enrollment that is only about half-white a generation from now. By 1984, for example, the public schools of the entire Chicago metropolitan area were 46 percent nonwhite and changing at the rate of about 1 percent each year. In the late 1980s, the public schools of California will have a growing nonwhite majority (Orfield, George, and Orfield 1986; Leadership Council, 1985; Arias, 1986). Not only racial change in the schools but also other large social changes are increasing the number of at-risk students.

The 1980s have been a period of major increase in the number and proportion of children living in poverty. Between 1979 and 1985 the number of black households living in poverty increased 13 percent, the number of poor Hispanic households was up 73 percent, and white families who were poor increased 23 percent from a much lower initial figure. Despite restrictions on the school lunch program adopted early in the Reagan administration, the number of children receiving free or reduced-price lunches rose 18 percent during these six years.

The percentage of children who were poor was vastly higher in the cities. Central-city children were 127 percent more likely than suburbanites to be eligible for free lunches (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-60, No. 155, pp. 106–107).

The percentage of American children living with a single parent who has never been married has almost quadrupled since 1970. Overall, the number of households headed by females increased 91 percent between 1970 and 1980 and another 10 percent from 1980 to 1985.

More of our children are coming from the least-educated families. The less-educated portions of the population have been much more successful in reproducing themselves than the more educated groups. On average, women who dropped out of high school are having nearly 60 percent more children than women with college degrees. They also tend to have them younger, meaning that generations are closer together and the cumulative effect of the higher birth rate is multiplied (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-23, No. 150, pp. 44–45). Parental education is closely related to school success of children.

Children today spend far less time with parents and depend far more on the schools and other caretakers for their educational preparation. Between 1950 and 1980, of the married women with children under six, the number who were working grew from 12 percent to 45 percent, and the number was highest for black women (69 percent). In 1985 half the women with children under three were in the labor force (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-23, No. 146). In a society that provides little preschool training, the burden on schools will surely grow.

Families headed by females, including 44 percent of all black families and 23 percent of all Hispanic families, were raising 11.2 million school-age children by the mid-1980s. Most of these families combined great economic problems with very weak educational backgrounds. Two-fifths of the black women and three-fifths of the Hispanic women heading families were high-school dropouts. These families were poor and getting poorer. Real income of black families headed by females dropped an average of 9.4 percent for blacks and 13.3 percent for Hispanics in the twelve years between 1973 and 1985, in part because of the failure of both welfare payments and the minimum wage to keep up with the cost of living (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-23, No. 146, pp. 8–9; *Washington Post Weekly Edition*, September 15, 1986, p. 20). This has been a period of sharp decline in the real earnings of black male workers (Neckerman and Wilson, in this publication).

By the mid-1980s a great number of the families providing the students for many central-city schools were in profound economic and social crisis. In 1983, 58 percent of black children in the United States were born to unwed mothers. Eighty-four percent of young black mothers under age twenty-five lived in poverty. In 1985, 54 percent of black children lived with only one of their parents. According to a Census Bureau study, young black families headed by females typically found themselves in a self-perpetuating and nearly hopeless cycle of educational and economic disadvantage. There was "a pattern of higher lifetime fertility, low-paying jobs, high unemployment and low-income [that] continues throughout the lives of most of the mothers and usually results in long-term socioeconomic disadvantages to their children" (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-23, No. 146, p. 11). Children born to teenage mothers are very likely to drop out of high school, perpetuating inequality. Their educational destiny was determined, to a large extent, before they were born.

Changes in American society clearly point toward increased burdens on the schools in coming years. School leaders have long argued that they cannot and should not be held accountable for solving all the problems created by other facets of public policy or the economy, yet they must cope with the results. A wide variety of policies—ranging from immigration policies to state welfare payment decisions, to minimum-wage changes, and to cutbacks in various employment and training programs—have all contributed to increasing deprivation for black and Hispanic communities, which were already in trouble a generation ago.

Since there are powerful and long-established relationships between race, poverty, and educational inequality, the schools may be threatened by a continuing large decline in achievement and a steadily increasing need for school leaders to figure out how to deal with children who are at risk because of their backgrounds. Unless this is done, the quality of American education and of the American citizenry and work force will severely decline.

CONSEQUENCES OF RAISING THE BARRIERS

As the low-income minority proportion of American students grows, it is urgent to avoid policy actions that may make schools even less successful in dealing with these students. In a situation in which it is far from certain that we know enough or are willing to make sufficient commitments to do much that would clearly improve their circumstances, the first clear principle of action should be "Do no additional harm." The general movement to raise academic standards is exactly the sort of wholly understandable and well-intentioned policy that may make things worse.

Everyone involved in education worries about standards. Most of us regularly bemoan low standards and their bad effects on the educational process. College faculty members often complain about students' weak preparation. Colleges gain prestige as they increase the standards for admission and make their course requirements more rigid. Colleges have been given encouragement to raise entrance standards rapidly in the 1980s, and many have eagerly done so. Professors love to teach better-prepared students, and colleges compete eagerly for the prestige that comes with increasing selectivity.

Research is only beginning to show the implications of these decisions, but the almost certain result, in the absence of powerful interventions, will be to reduce the high-school graduation and college enrollment of low-income and minority students. The trend of declining access is already very apparent in some of the four-year public universities that implemented such reforms earlier (Paul, 1987).

The serious immediate problem for high-school students is caused by the reforms that have rapidly imposed higher barriers to academic success in elementary and high schools. Higher standards for promotion from grade to grade and for high-school graduation were adopted by many central-city school districts in the late 1970s and were raised again in sweeping new requirements devised by many state governments in the early 1980s. The higher requirements make it much harder for relatively weak students to receive a high-school diploma. Supporters argue that the standards will increase motivation to learn and eliminate the fraud involved in "social promotion" policies. Usually there is no evidence to demonstrate benefits. They are simply assumed. The costs of the policies, particularly in terms of increasing dropouts among the at-risk students, have usually been ignored.

Although the criticism of the excellence movement has focused on state testing and graduation requirements and the states have clearly played a very powerful role, all problems should not be blamed on the states. The state reforms reflected a much broader climate of opinion. Many big-city school systems had already responded to severe criticism of their programs by implementing similar reforms before the Reagan administration and the excellence movement appeared.

By the mid-1970s, inner cities had overwhelmingly minority school systems, and it was already apparent that merely choosing minority leadership did not solve their very serious problems. By 1974 the Supreme Court had blocked both large-scale city-suburban desegregation attempts and efforts to gain more funds for poor school districts from state governments.

The central-city school districts were being harshly criticized for demeaning the educational process by abandoning educational standards and by replacing nationally standardized tests that had embarrassed school districts with locally designed tests that made the schools look as if they were making progress but left students without any idea of how they were really doing in preparing for college. The long-accepted idea of social promotion was bitterly criticized as standards sank so far that some city schools were handing diplomas to illiterates. By the late 1970s both black and white superintendents of central-city schools were implementing programs designed to force a more concerted approach to teaching the basic skills. They enforced the program by giving achievement tests, failing students who did not meet minimum standards, and toughening curriculum content.

The short-term effects of these policies appeared to be beneficial. Both the short- and long-term costs were relatively invisible for a long time, since they were generally borne by the schools' poorer students. The benefits were that the teachers could enforce what they and the school considered more reasonable standards and that the tests and the threat of failure could increase the efforts of many students. In the short run, statistics looked better because the worst students were held back and were carried on the schools' test records as students in lower grades, lessening the gap between their scores and the national norm for that grade. Superintendents and school leaders gained prestige with school critics who believed that the entire problem was caused by low standards and inadequate requirements. They gained reputations as tough and demanding educators.

These reforms were the first test of the dominant theory of the early 1980s—that very poorly achieving schools could be forced to change through commands from the top supported by very serious penalties. This was simply assumed. The problem was defined as one of shoddy and patronizing administration of the schools, one that could be cured by a strong assertion of sound standards.

Recent evidence from several big-city school systems, however, confirms the findings in earlier research that grade retention is not a policy without costs and that it may be a policy with few, if any, offsetting benefits for students. There may, in fact, be very serious costs in terms of increased dropouts and the economic losses associated with dropping out in the changing urban economy of the late 1980s. School research usually considers direct educational consequences, but it is foolhardy to ignore the reality that a diploma is not only a certificate of academic accomplishment but also the key to the door for almost all the decent jobs in society. Not having a diploma may not only punish the student academically but may make his or her economic situation virtually hopeless. It is educationally irresponsible to ignore these issues; as a social policy it is a disaster. We need to consider carefully the consequences of having stricter promotion policies and of relying increasingly on standardized testing and specific graduation requirements.

THE COSTS OF THE GRADE-RETENTION AND TESTING STRATEGIES

Grade retention was an old tradition in the schools before 1900. Throughout the twentieth century, however, the rate of grade promotion rose until it reached, for example, 98 percent for elementary students and 85 percent for high-schoolers in the Philadelphia public schools after World War II. Thus the idea of virtually universal grade promotion took hold long before the city school districts became predominantly minority. The elementary promotion rate in Philadelphia dropped to 93 percent in 1982, probably in response to new standards in the early grades (Larabee, 1982, pp. 5–6). It dropped more sharply elsewhere.

Research in Los Angeles shows that the toughening of promotion standards produced a high and rising retention rate in the 1980s in the city's public schools. The retention rate in the high schools was 12.3 percent in the 1981–82 school year and was up to 16.4 percent in the 1984–85 school year. Black and Hispanic students were retained at an even higher rate, 19 percent in the 1984–85 school year, compared to 13 percent for whites and 10 percent for Asians in the city school district. Minority students faced the probability that they would be retained at least once during high school (Feliciano, 1988).

Research in the Houston school district showed equally disturbing retention trends. The typical Hispanic high-school student in the Houston Independent School District, for example, was at least two years behind his age cohort in high-school grade level (Houston Independent School District, 1987).

These retention rates were related very strongly to dropping out and were not clearly related to educational gains. In other words, the experience in the 1980s confirms earlier research that showed little benefit and probable harm from strict grade-retention policies. If one adds to the equation the extremely negative effect that dropping out has on employment, earnings, likelihood of committing crime, and likelihood of successfully overcoming teenage parenting problems, the apparently tough reform becomes highly dubious (Valdivieso, 1986).

The link between failing and dropping out had been discussed extensively in research and policy analysis for years before the reforms of the late 1970s and early 1980s were enacted. A classic 1971 Civil Rights Commission report showed, for example, that Mexican-Americans were almost eight times as likely as whites to be behind their grade level by the eighth grade. The report cited a Labor Department study that showed that most dropouts were at least two grades behind and 84 percent were at least one year over-age (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1971, pp. 36, 38).

A recent unpublished study by the Chicago public school system shows that its move toward retaining students with inadequate test scores at eighth grade produced an extremely high dropout rate as those children matured. The district moved toward much tougher promotion standards in 1980. Now that the students retained in grade school have reached high-school age, some of the consequences are apparent. The study found that there appeared to be a decline in the high-school dropout rate the first year of the policy, but only because more low-achieving students were held back in eighth grade and thus did not appear on the high-school rolls. When comparing these students statistically with similarly achieving students before the retention policy, however, the report showed a large increase in the dropout rate for those held back. The students who were held back were very likely to leave school rather than to profit from the additional instruction (Toles, 1987).

In the Atlanta school district, where the system has been following a strong retention policy since 1979, the affected students will soon be reaching high school and the results will become apparent. The district was retaining 20-22 percent of students in first grade and following a policy of as many retentions as necessary (Hayes-Wallace, May 22, 1987). In New York City the Gateways retention policies have shown negative results in a recent evaluation.

In addition to grade-retention policies, there are a variety of other barriers that must be carefully evaluated. There is a high suspension rate in many schools, and these suspensions disproportionately affect minority students, particularly male minority students (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1987). Some research links suspensions to dropouts (Fine, in this volume).

The most direct way to increase dropouts late in high school, of course, is to create an additional obstacle to degree attainment just before the degree is awarded. States that adopt achievement tests that must be passed to receive a degree risk doing exactly that. They create the possibility that degrees will be denied to students who have met all the other requirements for graduation. The probability is very high that any such requirement will disproportionately hurt those groups that already face problems in schools. This issue came to a head when some states began to adopt pupil-competency tests related to graduation in the 1970s.

The first major legal battle over this policy came in Florida when it became apparent that the state test would cut off diplomas for a large number of black students. When it was first administered in 1977, 77 percent of blacks tested and 24 percent of whites failed. After three chances to pass, those continuing to fail were to be denied high-school diplomas in June 1979. Had the policy been enforced, 20 percent of the state's black students and only 2 percent of the whites would not have been allowed to graduate after passing all the courses previously required for graduation. The implementation of the test was delayed several years by the federal courts, and a set of new policies for early diagnosis and training came out of years of litigation. When the new requirements were finally implemented, the failure rate was much lower (Madaus, 1983). The Florida experience showed both the probability of disparate impact from a test requirement and the possibility of achieving many of the goals of a reform with less substantial costs if there is a major investment in making sure that those being required to clear higher hurdles have the training to make it possible. It is important to note, however, that the Florida schools face an extremely high overall dropout rate of 40 percent statewide long after the implementation of these and other reforms (*New York Times,* August 10, 1987).

Another increased barrier that has attracted very little serious policy discussion has been the adoption of higher standards for GED degrees. These adult education high-school degrees awarded through programs of study and standardized testing outside of traditional high schools are very important sources of credentials for jobs and college eligibility. As part of the reform movement, the standards have been raised and more training is being required. This may make the degrees more credible, but it will also make them less accessible. Policy changes of this sort should not be adopted without careful evaluation of the possibility that they could make things worse for those most in need without significantly improving their educational achievement.

THE NEED TO CONSIDER ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

One of the important aspects of the Florida competency testing case, *Debra P. v. Turlington,* was the testimony of employers about the economic consequences of failing to receive a high-school diploma. Executives of major firms hiring many Floridians testified that they would not consider employing a young person without a degree. In other words, there would be great and direct harm to those who did not get diplomas because of the new requirements. This testimony was congruent with evidence showing major differences in employment and earnings for those with and without college degrees in the 1980s. Those without high-school degrees were far less likely to find full-time work at a decent wage and much more likely to end up in jail or live in long-term poverty. The typical black high school graduate made 49 percent more income in 1984 than the typical dropout (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-70, X10 11, 1987:8). Michelle Fine has done a detailed study (reported in this volume) of what happens to dropouts as the hopelessness of their economic situation becomes apparent in the years after they leave school. Fine's study shows how uninformed the students often are when they leave and how crushing the problem of operating in the contemporary economy without a degree really is. The effect is not limited to the student but will also be felt by the children of the dropout. Dropouts tend to have more children than college graduates and to have them much younger. Since parental education and income are leading determinants of children's fates in school, the consequences of dropping out are almost certainly intergenerational. Dropouts produce dropouts, and the social costs cumulate.

Some experts have attempted to estimate the financial cost of dropouts. Even with relatively modest assumptions about the consequences for the person alone, the costs are staggering. In Cleveland, for example, a court-appointed monitoring office estimates the dropout rate at 49 percent. Applying a formula developed by UCLA economist James S. Catterall, the Cleveland dropouts from the class graduating in 1986 will "suffer a potential lifetime earnings loss of $469 million" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer,* April 26, 1987). A research study commissioned by the Texas State Legislature reported in 1986 that the state's high dropout rate was an extraordinary burden on the state's future. If one added to the direct costs the costs of imprisonment for lawbreakers, the costs of health care and welfare for additional children, the costs created by another generation of uneducated dropouts coming along, and many other indirect effects, the costs of dropouts would be immense. The costs would become even larger if the impact of an uneducated labor force on a community's ability to attract and fill jobs could be factored in.

Educators must not act as if economic facts do not exist. All of us know that one of the central roles we play in a complex modern society is one of "credentialing" people and helping employers sort out possible job candidates from those whom they will not even consider. We often speak proudly of the great enabling power of the degrees we give and the way in which they produce tangible improvements in the lives of successful students. We are often right. School systems and other educational organizations, for instance, give extraordinary importance to possession of the right educational credentials in their own employment decisions.

When we take credit for increasing the economic potential of students, we must realistically consider the other side of that relationship—the economic and personal damage that we can do to students who invest the time and receive nothing but an official statement that they have failed. It is our responsibility to be certain when we use such policies that they are designed and carried out in ways that do more good than harm to the people they are intended to benefit. The reforms raising the standards for high-school graduation have no basis in research or experience. There is much evidence in the research literature that points to exactly the opposite conclusion. In most cases, the school authorities responsible are not even attempting to evaluate costs. If we proclaim success in the short term while doing long-term damage, the negative results will become apparent and the criticism directed at the educational leaders responsible will be deserved. These things are beginning to occur.

RAISING STANDARDS WITHOUT RAISING BARRIERS

Teachers realize that drawing out the full potential of students requires a variety of techniques. Coercion and threats work with some students. For many others the key is good teaching, contact with other students excited about learning, or special incentives for successful work. The reform movement in many states has overwhelmingly concentrated on coercion, on reform by edict. There is, in fact, a need for energetic state leadership and challenges to local educators. Coercion as a basic approach, however, has not worked well in the past with at-risk children, and it seems unlikely to work well now.

A great deal more energy needs to be channeled into finding other and more effective ways to stimulate and support better work—ways that do not have the risk of both negative educational consequences and ruined opportunities to get a decent job.

THINKING BEYOND TRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

Educational leaders often treat issues of educational policy as professional questions, not political or economic questions, and they carefully avoid involvement in any other kind of issue. One does not need to think very long about the problems of at-risk children in the schools, however, to realize that this may not be a tenable strategy. For example, school people typically explain the highly predictable failure rates of minority and low-income schools simply by pointing to the students' social backgrounds, suggesting that nothing much can be done given the poor raw materials that the schools have received. Some state testing systems give this theory official sanction by providing norms for testing that compare school districts with similar racial and economic levels, not with the nation as a whole. Many educational systems classify schools by student background, tacitly expecting those with more poor and minority children to perform less well.

Policymakers often take the race and income segregation of the schools and the level of services, jobs, and income provided as given—as realities that the schools must somehow cope with or use as an explanation for their failure to cope. In fact, of course, these things are often the results of public decisions outside the school systems and are subject to change through different kinds of public decisions.

Residential and school segregation are the basic causes of both racial and economic stratification in urban public schools. In almost all cases where it has been fully litigated, school segregation has been found not to be part of the order of nature and not to be beyond the capacity of public officials to change. Local school agencies are almost always found guilty of a history of discrimination. Recent cases often contain findings of violations by state governments and housing agencies as well. There has been no national progress in school desegregation since the early 1970s and only modest change in the nature of housing segregation for blacks since fair housing became law. Hispanic school children are becoming much more segregated in all parts of the country (Orfield, Monfort, and George, 1986; Farley and Wilger, 1987).

When one thinks about the goals of many of the reforms and the academic experiments in turning around inner-city schools, it is apparent that the reformers are attempting through tremendous efforts to inject into inner-city schools some of the characteristics almost always present in middle-class schools. They try to stimulate the teachers to raise their expectations, to improve science and computing equipment and training, to provide better role models, and so on. Large amounts of aid and many years of effort may be expended on changing a single school in hopes of finding a model that can be used in many urban schools. While results in individual schools have sometimes been extraordinary, no such readily expandable model has been found in more than two decades of massively funded experimentation.

It is a mark of the pervasive acceptance of racial and class barriers in our schools that we continually launch efforts to partially reconstruct middle-class schooling in inner cities when we are closing excellent middle-class schools with unused space only a few miles away (in nearby suburbs) without giving any consideration to using them to provide better education for ghetto and barrio children. These schools, in fact, often possess attributes that cannot be equaled in the central city, such as better-trained teachers who are from more competitive colleges and have reputations and connections that will help students after they complete school. The suburban schools would also give the inner-city children the opportunity to learn to operate in the multiracial society they will probably have to cope with in college and in good jobs. We should not stop trying everything we can think of to upgrade minority and low-income schools, but we should think much more carefully about how to challenge the existing barriers and get the children most in need of educational opportunities to schools that are already successful in providing them.

Viable desegregation plans, particularly urban plans that include both the city and the suburbs, can lessen racial and economic separation and, when properly implemented, have both educational benefits and benefits for adult life. The desegregation that was forced by the courts and the federal bureaucracy from 1964 to 1972 profoundly changed race relations in Southern schools. Desegregation has become much more widely accepted by the public. The absolute majority of Americans below thirty now support it, as do more than two-thirds of those families whose children have been bused (data from Harris Survey conducted in Nov.–Dec. 1986, in *Education Week*, January 21, 1987, p. 6).

There has been extremely little state or local leadership for desegregation by education officials. Recent proposals in Connecticut and Minnesota are notable exceptions. In general, however, far more state energy and money have been put into resistance—usually futile resistance.

Educators who recognize the extremely strong relationship that exists between educational experiences and segregation by race and income must not merely use these relationships as justifications for the failure of the schools but must think about how to help the students who are most hurt by them. Needing special attention are the young minority students who have the potential to learn at grade level but find themselves in schools and classes operating far below those levels.

Minority students and their parents are often totally unaware that they are being shortchanged educationally until they reach college and find out when it is too late. They do not know because they live in separate societies with no contact with the educational mainstream as reflected in typical suburban schools. For the educational system to offer them any kind of real equity, it is very important that they be given better information, solid precollegiate counseling, and access to competitive levels of preparation through general desegregation, through magnet schools, or through the possibility of voluntary transfers to middle-class white or integrated schools.

In metropolitan communities where totally different and self-perpetuating worlds of schooling exist, there should be at least minimal standards for basic equity. Such standards require school officials to work toward bridging the gap between schools serving minorities and those serving the middle class and toward creating, within segregated and unequal minority schools, classes and programs that will competitively prepare the more talented students. Encouragement by state education leaders would facilitate such efforts.

State school officials need to be concerned about offsetting some of the consequences of segregation, not merely for educational reasons but also to protect themselves from possible legal liability. It is now commonplace for states to be held accountable to some degree for school segregation and to be ordered to assume both financial responsibility for and, sometimes, direct supervision of desegregation remedies—remedies that may include large and very expensive compensatory-education programs designed to overcome the effects of a history of unequal treatment. Such orders have been handed down in several states, including Missouri, Ohio, Delaware, Indiana, and Arkansas. States have negotiated settlement agreements requiring expenditures in Ohio and California. By far the best defense for state officials in any such litigation is a record of positive action to overcome segregation and its consequences (Tatel, Sneed, Lanigan, and Routh, 1987).

A second policy dimension that is crucial to educational leadership is the development of a realistic approach to financing the much greater educational burdens carried by schools with large concentrations of minority and low-income students. This is particularly true regarding the financial burdens of implementing the new reforms. No school that is already struggling hard to provide basic services to highly disadvantaged students should be forced to divert resources for new requirements that are less fundamental. If students have not learned to read, requiring them to take a course on computers is senseless.

Adequate resources should be supplied to prevent additional damage to students' lives from the new requirements. In other words, if the graduation requirements are raised, sufficient resources should be provided to schools to offer the courses and the support services to permit at least the great majority of those who would have graduated under the old requirements to succeed under the new.

Examining the legislative history of the reforms in several states shows that very little consideration has been given to such issues, particularly as those issues affect the largest urban systems. In state legislatures and state departments of education, these big-city systems are often defined as lost causes and denounced for what is seen as their insatiable demands for funding without clear evidence of academic gains. There is far too little understanding of the profound social and economic crises these school systems are confronting and perpetuating.

A third general policy should be to avoid curtailment of the supply of minority teachers and administrators. This could be accomplished by injecting sufficient funds and civil rights monitoring into the operation of college teacher-training programs to reverse the rapid shrinking of the supply of new black and Hispanic teachers so apparent in the recent statistics from several states.

Recognizing the terrible inequality of education for low-income students suggests that school officials not only need to think about policies that have unintended negative consequences but also need to play some role in discussion of public policies that would make the problems of the city schools even more desperate by making the poor poorer. Since the victims of such policies are typically disorganized and without political voice and since the schools are the only institutions that are forced to deal daily with the consequences, school people should speak to the problems, at least in a general way. Educators in inner cities are well aware of the problems of families depending on welfare payments that have been cut one-third to one-half in most states in constant value dollars since 1970 (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 1985). Teachers in schools with concentrations of welfare families see the educational problems that result when children are denied prenatal care, treatment of chronic debilitating illnesses, and sufficient food. When, as current housing statistics in many big cities show, it costs 75 percent or more of the cash income of poor families to pay for housing and no new subsidized housing is being built, it is easy to predict that those families will not have money for clothes, school fees, or almost anything else their children may need.

It is difficult for educators to speak to economic and social policy issues. But they should reach beyond their normal roles both because of the overwhelming educational consequences of social policy decisions and because they often have to fight for scarce resources, urging legislators to fund education at the same time the legislature is planning to slash other programs for poor families. Often, particularly in years of tight budgets and conservative administrations, education does fairly well in the political battle for resources, while all the other programs that affect opportunity for poor youth are defeated. To pretend that children can have an equal opportunity for education when they and their parents face debilitating poverty and deprivation of basic needs is to ignore what we know to be true.

All state educational leaders who blame the impossible educational situation in low-income schools on economic and social conditions should also say something about the public decisions that make bad conditions of family life in poor communities completely intolerable. Some state officials have spoken out on such issues as programs for child health care, for nutrition, and for teen pregnancy. These are a few of the policy questions that powerfully affect school conditions in low-income areas.

School officials and other supporters of educational reform cannot and should not become all-purpose social policy advocates. They should, however, explain to other policymakers and to the public that the worst and most intractable educational problems they encounter are rooted in racial and economic inequalities that are strongly tied to other public policies.

School policymakers need to realize that more and more members of their changing student bodies will be from backgrounds profoundly affected by social policies and that they will be functioning in an extremely stratified and segregated society where most of the dominant white politicians will be from and will represent communities where these problems are not seen or understood. If educators do not help the society to understand some of the roots of the problems that are reflected in the schools, there will be a continuing tendency to blame the school problems of minority and low-income schools on the personal inadequacies of the teachers, administrators, and students, not on the larger problems. Such blame is a dead-end course for policy and is profoundly disheartening to those working the hardest.

THE NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE

It is very hard to ask educational leaders who have been through an exhausting and difficult process of reform and are now, in many places, dealing with thorny problems of implementating sweeping changes with inadequate resources to take on another set of very difficult issues. Yet it must be done. The school population and its needs are changing at an extremely rapid rate, and there is a very serious possibility that the policy victories of the excellence movement may actually hurt many of the most vulnerable students in our schools unless the movement's policies are modified in appropriate ways. If these problems are not faced, it is very likely that the entire reform enterprise will come under increasing attack as some of the negative consequences become apparent. Within a year or two, substantial evidence of such damage will be assembled. The reform movement will be seen in a racial and class context that was not intended and that can be corrected.

Blacks and Hispanics believe in the public schools. In fact, they strongly share the traditional belief in schools as the keystone of opportunity. A striking fact of our public life is how highly people of all racial and economic backgrounds regard public education, particularly the education their own children are receiving. Even when there was a very strong conservative attack on the size and cost of government, leading to drastic cutbacks in some areas, the public wanted to spend more on public education. That support has been high even among those whose children are doing worst in public schools—minorities and the poor. The people on the bottom fully share the dream of opportunity, even though their children are attending the worst schools. It is often the only hope they can hold out that their children's fate will be better than their own.

Educators should be touched by the depth and intensity of this belief. They should realize that, in spite of everything they say about how the other institutions should not pile the burden of social change on the schools, the American public schools are the only basic institution in our society that has opportunity for all as its core mission and that has a profound effect on the vast majority of children of all backgrounds growing up in the United States. Great and even irrational faith is vested in public schools. Educational leaders need to respond to this hope by understanding much more fully the deeply rooted problems afflicting a growing number of students. Even as the excellence movement tapped a basic part of our understanding of the role of our schools, a new strategy for the goal of genuine opportunity for equal education will strike a deep chord in the nation's consciousness. A large and rapidly growing part of the public and of the national leadership knows that something is going badly wrong and that the strategies of the early 1980s will not do the job. More and more Americans realize that our children will not live in a white society but in a multiracial society that will be endangered if it cannot offer a fair chance to all. They believe that the schools can help, and they want to see the educational leadership of the nation turn attention again to this great goal.

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EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

Why They Rarely Exist for At-Risk Elementary-School and Adolescent Students

James P. Comer, M.D., M.P.H.

INTRODUCTION

When our Yale Child Study Center School Development Program staff began work in an elementary school in New Haven several years ago, the principal gave us what was intended to be a helpful warning. He pointed out that we should not expect to have the same success in his school as we had had in our initial project schools, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Katherine Brennan. He said, "The people in the King School area are poor, but they live in single-family homes." I pointed out that Katherine Brennan served a housing project and that the children had shown similar academic and social performance improvement. He countered, "Yes, but those are two-story project buildings; the children in our school are from a high-rise housing project."

A teacher in the same building said to me, "We can't expect grade-level work from these children because they have to put up with too much at home. For some it's quite an achievement just to be able to get to school." With this level of understanding and expectation, it is not surprising that the students, school staff, and parents were all underachieving. And these were well-meaning people . . . friends.

The principal and the teacher were white, but they were not hard-line racists. They had adequate administrative and teaching skills. They were caring people who wanted to do the best they could for the students. And to their credit, once the school improvement model was in place, they were both enthusiastic contributors to the school's subsequent dramatic success. The situation was similar for most of the staff.

A year later the principal gave a glowing report on the social and academic progress being made at the school. He described how staff members who had appeared "burned out" had been reenergized through participating in building-level, or school-level, planning and activities, particularly those designed to improve the social climate of the school. As an example he cited the good feeling after a staff event in which the male teachers prepared breakfast for the women teachers. As an afterthought he said, "And can you believe that there were no behavior problems among the students in the school that day?"

I could believe. There was no reported crime in Washington, D.C., on the day of the March on Washington, August 28, 1963, during the height of the intensified civil rights movement—and for many of the same reasons: pride and hope born of the generated ethos of the moment. When the major forces in a social system are mobilized in support of constructive activities, undesirable behaviors are minimized.

While this principle of human behavior is generally accepted, it is rarely applied to our understanding and implementation of school programs. But it is at the heart of the problem of less-than-effective schools for at-risk students. The failure to understand and to respond to the school as a modifiable social system—with academic learning as a function of the quality of relationships in the system—is more the problem of social and behavioral scientists, and of the culture, than of educators. The dominant viewpoint in our culture is that behavior is determined almost totally by an individual, without the significant influence—past, present, and future—of political, economic, and social policies and practices at every level. We have paid little attention to the complex way in which social policies and practices affect communities, schools, families, and, in turn, students' personal development and learning. Yet the understanding, attitudes, and behavior of the teacher and principal above were obviously influenced by research, training, and media information; by political, economic, and social policies and practices—past, present, and future; and by staff, family, and student responses to the teacher and principal.

In the absence of needed understanding, academic learning is too often thought of as a mechanical process that can be turned on and off at will by the student. And teaching is thought of as a mechanical process: as a transaction only incidentally involving relationships rather than primarily as a relationship that promotes and facilitates a desirable level of academic learning. This attitude is reflected in most of the education-reform reports up until now. The emphasis on raising teacher and student standards is simply a call for an increased amount of the same thing schools were already doing that did not work for many students. This "understanding" of and approach to the problem increase the risk of academic and life failure for students already at risk.

Academic learning is facilitated by overall growth and development—social-interactive; psychological-emotional-affective; moral; speech and language; and intellectual-cognitive-academic. Children who do not receive experiences that promote adequate overall development are at risk of failing in school and, in turn, failing in life. Schools that are unable to help children overcome their underdevelopment, or development that is adequate outside of school but not adequate to accomplish the academic task, simply maintain or increase the risk of academic and life difficulties for these children.

To overcome prior developmental limitations among students, adults who teach must have caretaking or child-rearing skills. And the climate of relationships in a school must be at a level that permits their use and effectiveness. All adults involved with young people are more or less child-rearers. Yet little or no attention is given to the selecting of teachers with these skills or to providing practice in such skills during their preservice and inservice training. Even less attention is given to helping them learn to create a building-level social system and an ethos that promote constructive interactions, teaching, and learning. These circumstances hurt the at-risk student the most.

In this paper I will first discuss the ways in which political, economic, and social conditions—past, present, and future—impact communities, families, and school teaching and learning. I will then explore the relationship between overall development and academic learning. Next I will discuss the black experience, illustrating the ways in which troublesome political, economic, and social policies and practices—past and present—eventually created and continue to create a disproportionate number of at-risk students among blacks. I will then consider the essential conditions needed to create effective schools for at-risk students and the obstacles to creating them. I will close with a discussion of the implications of my paper for chief state school officers.

EDUCATION, SOCIETY, AND BEHAVIOR

Thomas Jefferson and others argued that a system of public education was essential to the success of a democratic society (Padover, 1946). It was believed that in a society with a broad base of educated persons, it would be difficult for a small group of powerful individuals to serve their own interests at the expense of the great majority. It was also believed that public education was the only way to advance the arts and sciences and to promote civil and responsible behavior among enough people so as to ensure desirable societal functioning and stability. These beliefs led to the rationalization of federal government support for public education under the general welfare clause of the United States Constitution (Morris, 1980).

However, because we had an agricultural and highly industrial society until the 1960s, most heads of households were able to meet adult responsibilities—earn a living, take care of themselves and their families, experience a sense of well-being because they were able to do so, and function as responsible community members and citizens—without a formal education. As a result, the power and impact of education on societal functioning and individual behavior was not fully tested.

After World War II education became the ticket of admission to living-wage jobs and, in turn, the mechanism through which individuals met adult expectations and experienced a sense of well-being. Obtaining an education, as well as meeting adult work expectations, required a higher level of overall development than was necessary prior to that time. Indeed, the level of development necessary to meet everyday adult tasks and responsibilities was the highest ever required in the history of the world. This change occurred because of the rapid application of scientific and technological knowledge to every aspect of life, particularly after 1945. We moved from a horse-and-buggy level of technology in the early 1900s—not far removed from that of the wheel—through an age of automobiles and airplanes in the 1940s, to a jet-plane, rocket-age level of technology, all within the lifetime of today's senior citizens.

Scientific and technological change profoundly affected the nature of community life, creating new and challenging social problems. Many of our major social problems—including students at risk for poor academic learning—are due to our inability to adjust our institutions, particularly public schools, to the level and speed of social change. And yet the mission of schools remains the same—to create a broad base of people educated at a level and in a way needed to maintain a vital democratic society.

Prior to 1900 and indeed up until World War II, we were a nation of small towns and rural areas, and even the cities were collections of small towns. Heads of households often walked or rode short distances to work, except in rural areas. Teachers sometimes walked to school along with their students. Play or recreation was often local and communal—church or club picnics, dinners, dances, and the like. Teachers often attended the same churches as the parents of their students. Thus parents, teachers, administrators, and religious, economic, and political persons often interacted with each other in incidental ways.

With this kind of day-to-day interaction of authority figures, there was a fair amount of trust among them, and expectations and outcomes for desirable and undesirable behavior were clear and predictable. Adults and young people had a sense of place—even when it did not afford them a high level of status. And there was an overall sense of community.

Communication media were limited in impact right up until the 1940s. Because transportation was slow and often difficult, there were fewer people and ideas from outside neighborhoods or communities. Thus parents, teachers, administrators, ministers, policemen, and others were the "source of all truth" for children. During the critical early developmental years, almost all of what children learned about the world came to them from emotionally important authority figures. And the adults censored and presented the world to the young as they wanted them to understand it and respond to it. Because there was a reasonable consensus about what was right, wrong, good, and bad, these important authority figures often appeared to speak with a "common tongue." Under such conditions the school was a highly respected and natural part of a community. There was an automatic transfer of authority from parents to school staff. And with the frequent interaction and sense of agreement among authority figures, it was difficult for students to act in troublesome ways. Parents, school staff, neighbors, church members, and the like all supported desirable social development among young people. Thus difficult school behavior was not as common.

Nonetheless, the schools always failed to interest a large number of the students in the academic program. And for this reason and others, as late as 1940, 76 percent of all students left school prior to graduation (Snyder, 1987). Many of those who left had not had the kind of preschool experience and level of overall development that would allow them to find satisfaction in academic learning. But again, there was no problem. They could leave school, find work, meet all their adult responsibilities, and experience the related social and psychological benefits—the well-being needed for the kind of general welfare our social system requires.

After World War II we became a nation of metropolitan areas—with high mobility, rapid visual communication (television), and now telecommunication systems. Heads of households began to travel long distances to work. It was less common for teachers to live in the same neighborhoods and walk to school with their students. Parents, teachers, and administrators interacted with each other in an incidental or communal fashion less often than before. These changes and others reduced the sense of trust, place, and community that had previously existed in a natural way.

Television presented families with attitudes, values, and ways from around the corner and around the world. And the information went directly to young people without the censorship of meaningful adults. Some of the information children now receive is in conflict with the attitudes, values, and ways of their parents. Children can observe differences of opinion about what is right and wrong, good and bad, with every newscast and debate. Television dramas present violence and sexuality on an explicit level that was uncommon in the past.

The world of today, then, is infinitely more complex than the world of yesterday. And yet, young people are no more mature today at five, twelve, or eighteen than they were in the past. Again, to manage in the complex society of today, young people need the highest level of overall development ever required in the history of the world. They need sustained and skilled parental help to acquire such a level of development, as well as sensitive and supportive institutions, particularly the school. Yet, for many reasons, they in fact have less help and support for overall growth and development now than in the past.

Today both parents in a family often work. There is more divorce and more single-parent childrearing. Families under social and economic stress often lack or are unable to apply the childrearing skills necessary to help their children develop abilities necessary for functioning well in schools. The school is no longer a natural part of the community, and there is not an automatic transfer of authority from home to school. And where the staff and the community being served are different in significant ways—class, education, race, religion—there is the potential for conflict between home and school. Alienation and distrust reduce the ability of parents and staff to work together to support the development of students. A first-grade teacher in New Haven told me that she explained the expectations of her classroom to the students on the first day of school and a six-year-old raised his hand and said, "Teacher, my momma said I don't have to do anything you say."

Most schools have not adjusted their organization and management in a way that promotes better home-school relationships and, in turn, supports student development. Schools are still basically hierarchical in organization and authoritarian in management and style. There is top-down rather than collaborative management. Staff, parents, and students usually feel that they cannot contribute to or influence the program of the school, whether it meets their needs or not. Inflexible organization and management make it extremely difficult for the staff to take advantage of spontaneous and building-level-planned opportunities for teaching and learning. And, again, because learning and desirable behavior are understood as mechanical and willful acts rather than as a consequence of good overall development, school personnel are not trained to support child development.

EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Children are born totally dependent, with only biological potential, aggressive energy, and the capacity for establishing relationships. Without support from mature caretakers, the biological potential will not be developed; indeed, children will die. Aggressive or survival energy must be channeled into learning, work, and play, or it can be destructive or troublesome to the child and people around him or her. The purpose of education is to move children from their dependent state to a level of development in which they can successfully meet their adult tasks, including citizenship responsibilities.

Motivation and preparation for academic learning occur largely though the channeling of survival or aggressive energy into intellectual curiosity and self-expression. Improperly and inadequately channeled aggressive energy is responsible for most of the behavior problems we are concerned about among young people in school.

As parents provide food, warmth, security, and intellectual stimulation for the child, an emotional bond develops between the caretaker and the child. This permits the child to imitate, identify with, and internalize the attitudes, values, and ways of parents. The caretaker is then able to provide the child with experiences of ever-increasing complexity that lead to development along a number of pathways. There are many pathways along which development takes place simultaneously. Several are critical for academic learning: social-interactive, psychological-emotional-affective, moral, speech and language, intellectual-cognitive-academic.

The parent or caretaker who intervenes when a two-year-old attempts to take a ball away from another child promotes development along these critical pathways. He or she explains that Johnny cannot hit or violate Bobby but must either wait until he is through playing with the ball, work out an arrangement in which they can play together, or just go and do something else. In intervening and spelling out the options, the caretaker provides the child with the rules of the social-interactive game. This gives the child the motivation to control the impulse to hit or take and soothes any hurt feelings, thus supporting psycho-emotional development; and it presents what is right and wrong, thus providing moral training. Speech and language are involved as thinking, or intellectual-cognitive learning.

On a recent five-hour plane trip I observed a father teaching cognitive skills to his preschool-age daughter. "What is the opposite of *up*? . . . What do you usually think of as going together with a fork? . . . Why don't you finish this story for me?" Even when he limited her behavior, he taught. "If you stand up in your seat while the movie is on, what happens to the people behind you?" At one point the daughter said jokingly, "I'm so silly, I am dumb." Protecting her self-image, in a calm and good-humored fashion the father said, "Oh, you're not dumb. I'll bet you're one of the smartest girls in your nursery-school class." And sensitive to her energy level, just when I thought to myself that that was enough teaching for today, he encouraged his daughter to take a nap.

Most better-educated parents read to their children. The child has the adult to himself or herself in what is otherwise a busy day; hence, reading time is a positively charged period. Children's stories meet many of their psycho-emotional needs, and thus they want to hear them again and again. Eventually they associate the words with the pictures on the page and they begin to read from memory. Parents are delighted and excited, and the child enjoys the approval that comes with achievement. This reinforces the child's desire for mastery in reading and in managing other aspects of the environment. The child notices that the parent reads from the top down, from left to right, and exclaims in certain ways. These are prereading skills, and children who have such experiences usually go to school already reading or prepared to learn to read.

An eight-year-old asked his father what he would give him if he made all A's in school. The father said, "Wait a minute. You're not going to school for me. You're going to school for yourself. If you do not do well in school, your teachers won't hold me responsible; they will hold you responsible . . . and the same goes for your classmates. You will have to hold yourself responsible, not me." Good childrearing helps the child develop inner control, direction, motivation, and acceptance of responsibility for his or her own behavior and academic growth.

Children who receive such experiences at home generally present themselves to teachers and others in ways that bring them positive feedback, increasing their confidence and self-esteem. As a result, positive emotional attachment and bonding, similar to but less intense than that which takes place with parents, develops between school staff and students who are functioning well. This permits the students to imitate, identify with, and internalize the attitudes, values, and ways of the staff, including desirable social behavior and learning. Because early school learning has limited immediate utility, it is important that the relationship between teacher and student enable the teacher to serve as a valued role model and guide.

Children who have not had desirable and necessary preschool experiences are often underdeveloped along the pathways necessary for school success. Teachers not trained in child development often view their behavior as "bad" or consider indications of limited academic learning potential as "dumb." In our culture we punish bad people, and we have low expectations for people with apparently limited intelligence. Healthy, aggressive, reactive children often respond to such attitudes and behaviors in provocative ways, only making their situation worse. Teachers feel alternately angry and guilty, frustrated and disappointed, and they respond even more inappropriately. This eventually leads to a downhill academic course for the student, emotional burnout for the teacher who has large numbers of such students, and poor relationships in the school and between home and school. Students in such situations are at risk for academic failure. A disproportionate number of such students are black, Hispanic, and Native American. I will discuss the black American experience since it has been the area of my research.

EDUCATION AND THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

Understanding of the black experience is generally limited by implicit and explicit assumptions that, aside from slavery, it has been essentially the same as that of all other groups. It has been different in critical ways. It is important to understand the ways in which the black experience has been different, and the consequences of those differences, in order to develop effective strategies for overcoming obstacles to the development and full academic achievement of black youth.

Most American immigrants were able to maintain cultural continuity (Hansen, 1940). Most continued to use their same language and practice their same religion in the new country until opportunity and assimilation were possible. Many came from the same place in the old country and settled in significant numbers in the same place in the new country. This created homogeneous cultural enclaves in which there was a fair degree of social cohesion. In addition, they were able to vote almost immediately; thus various ethnic groups could gain political, economic, and social power in one generation. Such power permitted the groups to experience a wide spectrum of opportunities in the mainstream of the society. As a result, group members gained knowledge, skills, and contacts in every sphere of community life, increasing opportunity for the next generation. This permitted a three-generation family and group developmental cycle that paralleled economic development in this country.

Before 1900 it was possible for adult heads of households to be uneducated and unskilled and yet provide for themselves and their families in what was largely an agricultural and, eventually, an early-industrial society. This situation made it possible for heads of households to meet their responsibilities without education, promoting the level of family and community stability necessary for children to gain the moderate academic and social skills needed for success in the job market of the heavy-industrial age, 1900–1945. Well-functioning families during this period had the best chance of giving their children the academic and social skills necessary to gain the high level of education and the social behaviors necessary for success in the job market of the late industrial age, 1945–1980, and the postindustrial age, 1981 to the present. These conditions permitted immigrant groups to experience a sense of independence and opportunity and a sense of individual and group control of their destiny.

The black experience has been marked by cultural discontinuity, forced dependency, a limited sense of opportunity for an improved individual and group situation, and a limited sense of control.

West African societies, the origin of most black Americans, were organized through tightknit kinship groups in which the giving of direction, the provision of security, and the management of government, economic, religious, and other institutions were all integrated (Gibbs, 1965). Slavery destroyed these institutions along with language and other cultural forces that might have provided social cohesion. The provision of food, clothing, and shelter, and even sexual and social expression, were either controlled or supervised by the master. And no matter how hard or well the slave worked, it was for the benefit of the master and not for the glory of the tribe or tribal group, or to improve the condition of the slave or slave family (Elkins, 1963).

Slavery produced a range of behaviors from acting up and acting out to passive aggression to dependency, apathy, and depression. This led to harmful habits and conditions, such as working as slowly as possible, not planning for a future, and taking out anger and resentment at the master and the slave system on other slaves. Many of these troublesome attitudes and behaviors were transmitted from generation to generation, doing significant psychological and social damage (Comer, 1972). Some slaves were less traumatized through identification with the master and through religion, or the black church.

Identification with the master, or the aggressor, meant a sense of adequacy as a slave on the master's terms. However, the master still regarded the slave as an inferior person, so that this identification created group divisions and problems with self-identity. Religion permitted the slave to experience a sense of adequacy on "God's terms" rather than those of the master (Frazier, 1962). Religion thus provided slaves with a belief system that could become the motivation and basis of support for a constructive family and community life style. Religion and the black church provided the black community with the conditions that led to the first nucleus of educated people. It was the black church that provided the impetus for the intensification of the civil rights movement.

Opportunities in the mainstream of the society after slavery could have reduced many of the troublesome behavior problems created by the institution. But terror, violence, and subterfuge were used to illegally deny blacks the vote. Institutions that should have protected black rights and thereby created a sense of belonging and well-being often cooperated with the lawbreakers (Berry and Blassingame, 1982). Without the vote in the area in which most blacks were located, the group could not gain political, economic, or social power. It was denied knowledge, skills, and contacts within the political, economic, and social mainstream. Group cohesion and power grew only out of the black church, and it came under attack if it addressed political, economic, and social issues.

Because the black community had little power, it was possible not to provide adequate educational opportunities to the group. As late as the 1930s, four to eight times as much money per person was spent on the education of a white child as a black child (Blose and Caliver, 1936). Where blacks were disproportionate in number, the disparity was as much as twenty-five times. As late as the mid-1960s two prestigious white women's colleges together had an endowment that was one-half the endowment of Harvard. That one-half endowment of Harvard was more than the combined endowment of all the one-hundred-plus black colleges in the United States (Council for Financial Aid to Education, 1967). This is evidence that blacks were massively undereducated during the middle- or heavy-industrial era when most Americans were preparing for the late and postindustrial periods.

Despite these conditions most black families functioned reasonably well into the 1950s. Although blacks worked at the bottom of the economic barrel—as sharecroppers, tenant farmers, laborers, domestics—this menial labor was enough to provide basic needs. Rural and almost communal life styles permitted many communities to support desirable family functioning. And the attitudes, values, and ways of the black church culture sustained individuals and the group against social injustice and hardship. As a result, almost 80 percent of all black families had two parents as late as 1950 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960). And most black communities were reasonably safe until that time.

When education became the ticket of admission to living-wage jobs after World War II, the black community began to experience increased difficulty. Undereducated in prior years, blacks were the first to experience exclusion because of raised educational standards. And because blacks lacked political, economic, and social power, a high level of racism persisted in the society. Thus even well-educated blacks were denied adequate jobs and other economic opportunities.

Higher education for blacks was in the professional service areas and was designed to support a racially segregated social system, not to allow blacks to participate in all areas of the society. As a result, the black middle class is largely a professional group and did not enter the mainstream political and economic arenas in significant numbers until very late. In addition, the south-to-north movement tore many people away from the nurturant roots of the rural black church culture and left them excluded from the mainstream of the society in the urban North. As a result of all these conditions, many families that once functioned well began to function less well after the 1950s; and many blacks were denied the opportunity to undergo the three generations of development possible for other groups.

By the time the civil rights movement opened up opportunities for blacks in the 1960s, we were already into the middle of the last stage of the industrial era. And for the previous twenty to thirty years, the best-functioning black families, like most well-functioning families, had reduced their size in response to conditions in the industrial age. But many families that functioned less well continued to have a large number of children. It is for all these reasons that black families appear to be going in opposite directions: better-functioning families have more opportunities than ever before, and by every social indicator, families that function less well are under greater stress and in more difficulty than ever before.

It is for all these reasons that a disproportionate number of social casualties in the society are black. A disproportionate number of black children do not receive the experiences that will enable them to do well in school and to have a reasonable chance to do well in life.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY

FROM AN INTERVENTION MODEL

Our Yale Child Study Center School Development Program was designed as a building-level attack on the barriers to appropriately serving at-risk students. It was based on our understanding of societal change, the lag in institutional adjustment, the black experience, and developmental and relationship issues (Comer, 1980). Our four-person team from the Child Study Center—psychiatrist, social worker, psychologist, special-education teacher—began a collaborative program with the New Haven School System in two elementary schools in 1968. The two schools were 99 percent black and almost all of the students were poor.

In 1969 they ranked thirty-second and thirty-third out of thirty-three schools in language arts and mathematics on standardized achievement tests. The students were eighteen and nineteen months behind in language arts and mathematics by the fourth grade. School attendance was among the worst in the city, and there were severe behavior problems in both schools. Staff morale was low and parents were angry with and alienated from both schools. One school was eventually closed and replaced by a similar elementary school serving a housing project. In 1984 the original project school was tied for third and the replacement school was tied for fourth in achievement in language arts and mathematics on standardized achievement tests out of twenty-six schools. The students were a year above grade level in one school and seven months above in the other by the fourth grade. There had been no change in the socioeconomic makeup of either community.

We recognized that the parents were under social and economic stress for the reasons described above and that as a result a disproportionate number were not able to provide their children with the experiences necessary to perform well in school. Because of societal change, the community no longer aided the development of children in a natural way, and the level of development needed for success in school was higher than ever before. There was a need for the school to work with parents to support the student development needed for acceptable academic learning. But the staff was not trained nor was the school organized and functioning in a way to make this possible. In addition, income, education, race, and class differences created tensions and often anger and alienation between home and school. These factors contributed to difficult interactions among parents, staff, and students.

We knew that we could not mandate the needed changes. We concluded that we would have to develop a process that would change the ecology of or interactions within the school in a way that would facilitate student development and academic learning. Thus our focus was on the social system more than on any particular individual or group in the school enterprise.

We created a school governance and management team that was led by the principal but was representative of all of the adults in the building. It included teachers selected by teachers, parents selected by parents, and a member of the mental-health team (made up of the support staff—social worker, psychologist, and special-education teacher). This group developed a comprehensive building plan focused on the school social climate and the academic program. Staff development activities were based on building-level goals and strategies. The mental-health team worked in a preventive way as well as in the traditional way, providing help to the individual child, group, or family. The parent group supported the program of the school as designed by the governance and management team, giving particular support to the social program.

The school governance and management group coordinated all of the plans, activities, and people in a way that reduced duplication, confusion, and difficult interaction. It identified problems and opportunities, developed intervention programs or delegated responsibility for developing them to other groups in the school, assessed the interventions, and modified them on the basis of the findings. All of this was done with a sensitivity to child-development and relationship issues that was provided to the group by the mental-health team representative.

Certain rules and philosophies guided our work. First, we took a "no-fault" approach . . . not blaming the students, their parents, teachers, administrators, or anybody else. Second, it was understood that members of the governance and management team could not paralyze the principal. On the other hand, the principal could not use the group as a "rubber stamp." Decisions were made by consensus so as to avoid "winners and losers." We looked for ways to address problems within ourselves and in the building before turning to the central office and other outside help.

This approach systematically restored the desirable climate and relationships between home and school that existed in a natural way in the pre-1940s communities. It empowered parents, teachers, administrators, and students through collaborative, coordinated planning and program implementation. It gave everybody involved a sense of ownership in the school and a stake in the outcome, thus motivating desirable behavior.

Teaching was based on an understanding of what the children had not received in preschool experiences and was reinforced through relevant and meaningful activities. At the same time, the emphasis was on teaching basic skills. The involvement of parents in planning and implementation helped to make the program culturally sensitive and to make parents and staff accountable to one another. The work of the mental-health or support team helped all involved utilize child-development and relationship principles in every aspect of the school program.

Eventually a program called "The Social Skills Curriculum for Inner-City Children" was designed. It systematically provided low-income black children with the experiences that many middle-income children gain simply by growing up with their parents. The teaching of basic skills, social skills, and appreciation for the arts was carried out in this program through four units—politics and government, business and economics, health and nutrition, and spiritual and leisure time. This approach promoted social development among the students, which led to improved academic performance and set in motion a circular and reciprocal action that gradually improved the quality of living and learning in the schools.

A follow-up study on twenty-four students from our project and twenty-four students from the same community who did not attend our project schools, conducted three years later and in the same middle school, showed our project students to be two years ahead in language arts and a year ahead in mathematics. Students from our project schools were more often leaders and had fewer behavior problems. Similar results using our model have now been demonstrated in more than twenty elementary schools.

FOR PUBLIC POLICYMAKERS

Public policymakers, particularly chief state school officers, can help at-risk elementary and adolescent students by effecting changes in policy and practices in several areas. I will address education and training; standards for teachers, students, and working conditions; counseling and selection of teachers and administrators; and inservice support.

EDUCATION AND/OR TRAINING

Preservice education and training should provide teachers and administrators with an appreciation of the purposes of education within the context of the liberal arts courses needed for the future teacher to be culturally literate. Such a curriculum should include instruction in economic and social history and in the appreciation of the multicultural nature of our society. Certainly, courses in traditional teaching methods are needed. But equal attention should be given to providing teachers and administrators with the kind of understanding and skills needed to create a school climate that supports overall student development, desirable behavior, and academic learning. All teachers and administrators need to be well grounded in child-development and behavior theory and knowledge. Prior to graduation, they should have to demonstrate the ability to apply such knowledge through supervised work with students.

Future teachers should be taught the basic principles of school organization and management. They should have an opportunity to learn realistic alternatives to negative discipline such as scolding, punishment, and exclusion. Teachers should be prepared to work with parents, administrators, and the community in collaborative ways; and the preservice program should enable teachers, administrators, and service personnel such as mental-health teams to collaborate prior to the time they are expected to do so in difficult inservice situations.

During the student (or practice) teaching, the student teachers should have an opportunity to observe highly competent and successful teachers organize and manage classrooms and teach subject-area material, as is the case in many traditional programs. In addition, attention should be given to having future teachers observe such teachers facilitate the social, psychological, and emotional development of students. This should include academic, social, and psychological evaluation of students, self or other staff, school or community problems, and structures and events interfering with or facilitating learning. The experience should enable the future teacher to observe the teacher working with the administration, support staff, and parents on matters of school governance and management. The student teacher also should have an opportunity to do all these things, under supervision, himself or herself.

STANDARDS

I have no quarrel with the need for high standards for staff or students, but we must be careful not to base our decisions about standards on examples from foreign cultures, in which different student populations and sociocultural conditions exist. The recommendations for the reform of American schools recently made by several groups are probably appropriate for our top college-bound students but do not address the underdevelopment and the different needs of most of our students. It will be harmful to continue to suggest that most of our students are not meeting "the standards" when a set of standards geared to their needs has not been developed. When such standards are developed, they must not limit opportunity for any group of students, but must allow them to compensate for their underdevelopment and move to the level of their ability.

Inadequate attention has been given to standards relative to the working conditions of school staffs, to decisions made by school boards and/or school finance committees, and to teacher-support arrangements. The salaries of many teachers and administrators remain too low, and many work in less than reasonable physical plant conditions, with too few supplies and materials. Too many policy decisions relative to education are made by persons with little knowledge about children, learning, school organization, and management. Sometimes political patronage, personnel organizations, and/or union interests and needs are given higher priority than student needs. A set of standards for behavior, performance, and conditions in all these areas would be helpful.

COUNSELING AND SELECTION

Because motivation for academic learning grows largely out of the relationships children—especially young children—have with meaningful, positive adults, it is important to select teachers and administrators for their ability to work well with children. There is much to suggest that the greater emphasis on curriculum content than on relationships in middle and secondary schools is a major contributor to behavior problems, including an inadequate investment in learning, among many middle- and high-school students. A major complaint of dropouts and poorly performing students is that "they don't care."

Most teachers do care. But teaching is a difficult task. It requires a particular temperament and good interaction skills. It requires analytical and creative thinking—most useful in independent, individual actions—as well as the capacity for collaboration, cooperation, patience, and tolerance. These combined traits—sometimes conflicting—are not widely found in the general population and are not easily developed. When people enter the field of education and lack the suitable traits but are forced to remain for financial and other reasons, everybody involved is harmed, particularly at-risk students most in need of highly motivated, effective teachers and administrators. Thus some system of preservice and inservice counseling and selection for needed traits is as much indicated as selection for academic achievement. Persons "counseled out" of education are often relieved and more successful elsewhere. Even with a growing shortage of teachers, policies promoting selection and counseling could be useful and, in the long run, beneficial to all.

SUPPORT SERVICES

As the teaching task became more complex after the 1940s, the role of support disciplines—psychology, social work, special education, counseling, nursing, and others—increased. But too little has been done to modify the training in these areas from their parent disciplines, particularly psychology, nursing, and social work, in order to permit their full integration and appropriate use in schools. Thus the one-to-one treatment approach used in medicine after problems arise is still the one most utilized in schools. But the application of child development, behavioral science, and health knowledge to all aspects of a school program is equally, if not more, useful. Teachers and administrators will be better able to use support services in this way if they have an opportunity to work with support personnel while all are in preservice training.

Also, it is my impression that schools and school systems serving the highest number of at-risk students do not adequately use available inservice time. Inservice is often planned from the central office and is not based on building-level goals and strategies. Studies show that even when such inservice is well done and exciting, knowledge gained is not integrated into practice and maintained as relevant to building-level goals and strategies.

Another important area of support is the coaching of teachers and administrators, particularly of inexperienced personnel. Because coaching is associated with the practice of supervision for evaluation purposes, it is being resisted and underused as a support mechanism. The same is true of the school program audit similar to that used for accreditation. Yet these approaches are used regularly and effectively in industry. They are a way to simultaneously promote accountability and assist individuals and programs in need of help, as well as maintain excellence. The *careful* introduction of these approaches—training, program development, attitudinal change—could make such practices acceptable and useful.

SUMMARY

Effective schools rarely exist for at-risk elementary-school and adolescent students because rapid societal changes have reduced the supports available for the preschool development of many students. Simultaneously, other changes have increased the level of development needed for success in school and in life. Institutions, particularly schools, have not made the kind of adjustments needed to help at-risk students reach the level of development needed for school success. A disproportionate number of at-risk students are among minorities because of the social and economic histories of these groups. Programs based on a recognition of the problems causing risk and designed to overcome them can be successful. Public policymakers can promote changes in the training, standards, counseling and selection, and support of teachers and administrators that can reduce the risk for many elementary-school and adolescent students. But because such changes are difficult to bring about, effective schools for at-risk elementary-school and adolescent students rarely exist.

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DE-INSTITUTIONALIZING EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY

Contexts That Constrict and Construct the Lives and Minds of Public-School Adolescents

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At the first Parent-Teacher Association meeting, Mr. Stein, the principal of a comprehensive public high school in New York City, announced, "Welcome to ____ High School. We are proud that 80 percent of our graduates go on to college." Of course, Mr. Stein did not say that only 20 percent of any entering ninth-grade cohort ever graduates.

Milan Kundera, in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984), introduces the notion of "kitsch," one which unfortunately plays well and prominently in urban public schools. As Kundera defines it, kitsch entails "the absolute denial of shit . . . kitsch excludes everything from its purview which is essentially unacceptable in human existence" (p. 248). Evidence of doubt, irony, and ambivalence that threatens an institution's presentation of self is banished.

My work has taken me inside diverse institutions of public schooling as a survey researcher in a South Bronx alternative high school; as an ethnographer in a year-long participant observation of a comprehensive high school in Manhattan; as an interviewer of some fifty high-school dropouts in their homes throughout Central and East Harlem; and as an expert witness in a racial desegregation lawsuit in the Northeast, which took me inside the halls and minds of a predominantly minority public high school and its nearly exclusively white counterpart 2.4 miles apart. The traditions of "kitsch" have overwhelmed this spectator of public education.

In 1981 I was hired as the evaluation researcher of a special program in an alternative high school in the South Bronx in New York City. Armed with surveys, interview schedules, and standardized instruments, I selected forty informants in September whom I naively expected would be waiting for my "posttest" in May. Within the nine months, however, over one-third of the original youngsters had dropped out. Converting methodological problem into research opportunity, I decided to compare those adolescents who had dropped out against those who remained in school, using the September data on depression, attributions of success and failure, perspectives on social injustice, reactions to classroom inequities, and presentations of self as "socially desirable."

Much to my surprise, the following portraits of "dropouts" and "persisters" emerged:

> THOSE STUDENTS WHO DROPPED OUT were significantly less depressed, more likely to say "my problems are due to poverty, racism, and my personality," more likely to say "if a teacher gave me a B and I deserved an A, I would do something about it," and less likely to present themselves as "socially desirable"—that is, to conform—than those students who remained in school.
>
> THOSE STUDENTS WHO REMAINED IN SCHOOL were significantly more depressed, more likely to say "my problems are due to my personality," more likely to say "if a teacher gave me a B, I would do nothing about it; teachers are always right . . . ," and presented themselves in a quite socially desirable mold—that is, conformed extensively relative to their peers who dropped out.

To summarize: The dropout profile was of a student relatively nondepressed, critical of social injustice, willing to take initiative, and unwilling to conform mindlessly. "Good students," those who persisted, were relatively depressed, self-blaming, teacher-dependent, unwilling to take initiative in response to an unfair grade, and endlessly willing to conform. So much for the stereotype of the helpless dropout; and, perhaps as tragic, so much for the image of the assertive, well-socialized good student (Fine, 1983). My notions of what constituted a dropout and what made for an educational persister were fundamentally challenged.

Intrigued that dropouts could be reconceptualized as critics of educational and labor market arrangements and that dropping out could be recast as a strategy for taking control of lives that are materially out of control, I searched the literature only to find the prevailing images of the helpless, hopeless loser (see Fine and Rosenberg, 1983; Elliott, Voss, and Wendling, 1966; Felice, 1981, as exceptions), along with a persistent absence of empirical information and a substantial neglect of the topic of why students drop out of high school. More kitsch. Along with Pearl Rosenberg, (Fine and Rosenberg, 1983) I learned that while 25 percent of students nationally drop out of school—including disproportionately greater percentages of low-income and working-class students, Native Americans, Hispanics, and blacks, "special-education" students, those who have been retained at least once, those with repeated suspensions, and those who were pregnant and/or parenting—educational psychology tests remained silent about the issue. The national educational reform documents and legislation had also been relatively neglectful of the topic, and the psychological and sociological literature continued to represent dropouts as depressed, helpless, hopeless, and without options.

We began to question: Who is served by a rhetoric of dropouts as losers? What is obscured if dropouts are themselves presumed to be *deficient* in a *fair* system, rather than *challengers* of an *inequitable* one? What enables educators and policymakers to continue to describe "at-risk" youth as a minority unable to meet the demands of the system when prevailing structures, ideologies, and practices of public education have rendered most urban adolescents at educational risk through the nuances of institutionalized inequity?

Designs for Change, an educational research and advocacy organization, tracked 39,500 Chicago ninth-graders and found that of this cohort 21,000 failed to complete high school within the public school system, that one-third of those who did graduate read at or above the national twelfth-grade norm, and that only 8 percent of the original group of black and Hispanic ninth-grade students both graduated and read at or above the national average (Designs for Change, 1985). How can we continue to presume that a small, discrete group of urban adolescents are "at risk"? How can we pronounce that 80 percent of graduates proceed to college when in many public schools only 20 percent graduate? And yet, given the vehement public criticism of public schools, one must also ask, how can educators *not* present their best face, even if it deceptively represents only one chapter of the story?

To have no public conversation about the complexity of the dropout problem is to participate in kitsch, and this was the case up until five years ago. Recently we have heard more about the issue. Indeed, many conflicting voices speak to the topic today. Chester Finn, Assistant Secretary of Education, claims that urban dropout statistics are "scare tactics." He offers comfort in *Public Interest,* noting that many dropouts ultimately return to school to earn their GEDs. Finn, however, does not tell how many of those who enter GED programs do not earn their GEDs; he does not address the limited earning power of a GED relative to a standard high-school diploma; and he fails to examine social class, race, ethnic, or gender discrepancies in these return-rate data. And he does not call, of course, for intervention (1987).

Finn, with Secretary of Education William Bennett and many others active in the current reform movement, calls for "excellence-based reform," which, if implemented uncritically, would institute policies to punish educational failure *without providing resources and/or remediation to prevent or correct failure.* Such practices will swell the ranks of dropouts and destroy the educational possibilities for precisely those youths considered most at risk (*Education Week,* 1985; McDill, Natriello, and Pallas, 1986).

Other educators closer to the site of practice, including those associated with the National Education Association's Committee on Dropouts and Dropout Prevention Projects across major urban areas, call for programmatic reforms for at-risk youths. But they often operate as if dropouts constitute a discrete group, as if the dropout problem were located inside the heads or wills of students, isolatable and remediable without massive structural change.

Some critics attending to the dropout problem—from both the political right and left—seize the moment to bemoan these statistics as merely redundant, as another piece of evidence of a two-tiered society in which public schools simply reproduce class, race, and gender inequities.

This paper aims to get beneath the kitsch and unearth the complexities of dropping out; to examine critically the outcomes, structures, and practices of educational inequity; and to imagine the ways in which public educators might de-institutionalize educational inequity. The paper ends with cautious recommendations to the chief state school officers—cautious because I remain skeptical of top-down mandates. I make the recommendations because you [chief state school officers] are the policymakers and the exemplars of public education, and if you do not take a courageous stand to provide more for those who have least, then no one will.

The first half of the paper frames those aspects of public education that function as barriers to serving at-risk youth. Relying on the analytical frames of injustice theorists including Morton Deutsch (1975), Barrington Moore, Jr. (1978), Maxine Greene (1986), John Ogbu (1978), and my own theoretical writings on injustice (Fine, 1983, 1986), I trace the complex ways in which public schools obstruct the very possibilities and promises of educational justice that allow people to dream of what could be. The second half of the paper addresses the possibilities embodied in the prospect of de-institutionalizing inequity by enabling a critical social education through the public schools.

THE OUTCOMES OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INDICATORS

Reports from New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and other major cities document high-school dropout rates ranging from 40 to 60 percent (Aspira, 1983; Hess and Lauber, 1985; Natriello, 1986). The Designs for Change study of Chicago students confirms that most leave prior to graduation; some are educated to grade level, and few who are black or Hispanic gain an empowering or enlightening education. Most working-class and poor adolescents who travel through public schools—whether dropouts or graduates—voice some critique of a system that has served them badly, and many blame themselves for miseducation. I was told often, in interviews with recent dropouts: "I'm seventeen, and it's a shame. I got nothing to show for it. It's too late for me, but a better life for my baby. A house in New Jersey and Catholic schools" (Fine, 1986). Almost all ultimately suffer economically, socially, and psychologically. They survive at the bottom of a social heap layered ostensibly by merit but empirically by social class, race, and gender.

As educators we need to ask ourselves how we feel about this layering as it relates to our tasks of public schooling. Perhaps most subscribe to the necessity of social layering or stratification. Some may feel that, in our society, race, social class, and gender unfairly predetermine one's location among the layers, and that public schooling is precisely the institution which enables individuals to move across layers, irrespective of their demographic characteristics.

Despite prevailing ideologies of such mobility and equal opportunity, evidence from the U.S. Department of Labor on the aggregate economic consequences of dropping out of public schooling suggests otherwise (Bastian, Fruchtner, Gittell, Greer, Haskins, 1985; Carnoy and Levin, 1985). Those most likely to drop out of high school suffer most for doing it; those who graduate do not earn equally for having a high-school degree. The credential seems to multiply, not level, economic advantages rendered by race/ethnicity, gender, and social class of origin. Likewise, not having a high-school diploma exacerbates economic disadvantage rendered by race/ethnicity, gender, and social class of origin.

Department of Labor data confirm that social class of origin, race, ethnicity, and gender systematically and grossly influence economic outcomes in our society (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Rumberger, 1986). With a high-school degree, female full-time workers still earn less than males at a ratio of .59 (U.S. Department of Labor, 1983, p. 98). Even more compelling, these same data indicate that the absence of a high-school degree bears significantly different consequences by race and gender. Let us look at those who live in poverty "because" they have dropped out of high school. Relying on 1980 data, we see that 15 percent of white male dropouts (age twenty-two to thirty-four) live below the poverty line, compared to 28 percent of white females, 37 percent of black males, and 62 percent of black females. Not having a degree correlates with substantially different economic profiles based on one's race and gender. The same is true for persons who have earned a high-school diploma: 8 percent of white male graduates live in poverty, compared to 11 percent of white females, 17 percent of black males, and 31 percent of black females (U.S. Department of Labor, 1983, pp. 117–118). While attainment of a high-school degree does improve an individual's economic prospects *within* a demographic group, acquiring a high-school degree does not convert the opportunities of a black woman into those available to a white man.

Schools will not systematically change the economic arrangements in our society (McGahey and Jeffries, 1987; Sherraden, 1987). If all of the high-school dropouts in Central and East Harlem whom I interviewed returned to school and completed their degrees—indeed, if all adolescents in Harlem remained in high school through graduation—the unemployment and poverty rates of Harlem would not then approximate those of the fashionable East Side.

Educators' obsession with economic outcomes as an indicator of educational excellence bears serious consequences for teacher burnout, the promotion of social illusions in schools ("If you stay in school, you'll get a job"), and the suppression of creative pedagogical and curricular innovation, which could promote additional educational outcomes such as social critique, participation, and community involvement. As long as educators assume that schooling is designed primarily and exclusively for aggregate economic equity, we fool ourselves into believing that public schools should be designed primarily, if not exclusively, toward work and mobility outcomes. We confront (and often deny) substantial and widespread failure, and we remain trapped uncritically by pedagogies and curricula that have been rendered obsolete for today's youth.

By accepting social stratification as an overlay on our public schools, we as educators reinforce such stratification through institutional practices. These include multitiered high-school systems, which "triage" students (Hess and Lauber, 1985); tracking and special-education placements that usually, even if well intended, result in the indelible branding of students and few documented positive outcomes (Biklin, 1988; Oakes, 1985); and policies that promote, without support, the retention, suspension, discharge, and "voluntary withdrawal" of large numbers of working-class and poor adolescents prior to graduation (Fine, 1986; National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1987).

Those who are called "at risk," students who *need the most educationally*, suffer disproportionately from practices that may be designed toward better discipline but which empirically facilitate early exit. These practices include, but are not limited to, the following: heavy discipline; higher suspension rates (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1987); more notes sent home; increased probability of being retained and "tracked down" (Oakes, 1985); dull and repetitious pedagogical strategies (e.g., "I have written forty words on the board. Now define them before the end of the period"); remote curricula; low expectations; depressing predictions (in a Philadelphia suburb an educational consultant was reminded, "Special programs are for the talented students, not the ones who are having a hard time no matter what. They can't appreciate participatory education or innovation. They'll just take advantage"); and parental exclusion from schools. These institutional experiences predict well the tendency to leave high school prior to graduation.

Let me invite you to transcend the debate over educational achievement and economic equity, to move away from the question of whether or not education reaps equitable economic rewards. Instead, let us review the outcomes of education not solely in terms of economics but in terms of students' acquiring the abilities to critique, to organize collectively, and to pose significant challenges to prevailing social and economic arrangements; to think, work, and participate creatively. What if schools were truly about the creation of social activists—critical schools as many of you say, should be; caring, as all of us would wish them to be; and collectively active, as so many need them to be? What if these were among the indicators of excellence in schools? Then the predominantly white upper-class high school in the Northeast lawsuit referred to earlier, which boasts AP test scores in the upper quartile, would be deemed "bankrupt." Its students in interviews routinely disparaged the predominantly black school 2.4 miles down the road. What if these students were considered to be educationally disadvantaged and to have been denied a thorough and efficient education as evidenced by their misunderstandings of race, social class, and privilege? Then I would be much more sanguine about the possibilities, if not the current realities, of public education's promoting equitable outcomes. What if at-risk adolescents could remain in or return to schools committed to educating them toward empowerment through social critique, affirming what I have called a "sense of entitlement to better"? Then, at the level of social movements, critical collectives, and powerful politics—maybe even at the level of reading—we could create something better: a truly educated populace.

At this point in history, however, even if we stop obsessing about economic outcomes of education as the primary indicator of educational equity and rely instead on access to critical education as a marker of equity, public schools still offer evidence of being structured inequitably. Not everyone has access to a critical education. Indeed, those who begin with the greatest sense of their own voice and worth are most likely to be invited into a context of critical education. Those with the most diminished sense of personal worth and voice are most likely to be denied just such an education.

Students in high school seemingly need to *earn* the opportunity to be critical, to participate, and to work collectively. "Smart kids" get to participate; "remedial kids" get to memorize. "Smart kids" get to work in groups; "remedial kids" are accused of cheating. "Smart kids" are creative; "remedial kids" are right or wrong. When I interviewed high-school dropouts about their educational biographies, a number responded similarly to my question "When you were younger, were you the kind of kid who participated in class a lot?" It took three independent responses for me to understand: "Not me. I was a good kid." My interview question naively assumed that all of us were raised to believe that having a voice in a classroom was encouraged, nurtured, and rewarded. For these youngsters, however, participation in school signified the "bad student." Participation and collectivity in classrooms seem to be privileges available primarily to those who will assuredly not say anything that will disrupt. Using economic and empowerment indicators, then, high-risk students lose the most, within and without their high-school educations.

Whether or not our society is committed to critical education toward empowerment remains an empirical and political question. About whether or not many teachers are so committed, I have no doubts. I have seen talented and splendid evidence of just such teaching. (For example, Ms. Schilling created a writing collective from among her "remedial" students, who were alive, smiling, attending, and active by the end of one semester. Likewise, Rose Torreuellas of the El Barrio Popular Education Program works with Hispanic dropouts who "hate" to write. She describes a program in which students developed a script for a videotape in which the graffiti artist, the conga player, the poet, and the dancer "came alive." The youngsters were "able to demonstrate skills they have that are marginalized in traditional educational institutions.") Whether or not you, as chief state school officers, are committed to such critical education, I can only invite you to see this as your responsibility, so that Marian Wright Edelman and so many other social activists are not working alone for social change, and so that we can be engaged collectively in the project of de-institutionalizing educational inequity.

Starting from this vision of schooling as a public movement for the construction of critique, community, and creativity, I invite you to consider the structural, ideological, and practice-based processes that currently institutionalize inequity in our public schools, and then to imagine how de-institutionalization could flourish.

INSTITUTIONALIZING EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY

> Field Note: The auditorium at Hunter College is filled—girls in white dresses; boys in suits; graduating students in caps and gowns. No Walkmans, sweatshirts, bandannas, nylon stocking caps. No "I love (or don't love) high school" buttons; no hallway threats of expulsion.
>
> Grandmothers from Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. Mothers, fathers, uncles, little brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews. The room smells of pride. In many cases the first in their family ever to receive a high-school diploma is about to do so.
>
> They line the stage—principal, administrators, counselors, teachers, and some parents, representatives of the Parents Association. Most white. The auditorium is filled. Most black. The lights of cameras flicker.
>
> Awards are presented for feats ranging from academic success in each discipline (including special education) to perfect attendance.
>
> Principal: Our valedictorian (a black woman) makes us very proud. She has been granted a total of $96,000 in scholarships to study medicine at Haverford College.
>
> The entire auditorium—the graduating class, families, and friends—roars. On their feet with collective pride. I count the graduating class: a total of 200. In a school of approximately 3,200, I cynically fantasize a moment of silence for the approximately 70 percent of students who began ninth grade four years ago and who haven't graduated and, for the most part, won't.

To understand how educational institutions participate in breeding inequity, we need to reflect on those elements of public schooling that contribute to students' "at-riskness":

- *Educational policies and structures* that contribute to and then justify inequitable outcomes;
- School-based processes of *silencing* that mute and discredit voices of critique so that educational inequities persist unexamined; and
- Curricular and pedagogical practices that *pathologize* student critique, insights, and participation and represent students' families and communities as deficient.

THE STRUCTURES AND IDEOLOGIES OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY

The structuring of educational inequity, historically organized within the explicitly elitist two-tiered "vocational" and "academic" high schools (Kantor and Tyack, 1982; Katz, 1976; Tyack, 1974), is now diffused through a variety of innocuous, seemingly necessary and "fair" educational structures and policies. The multitiered public high-school system distributes and segregates students by "ability," race, and social class. Promotion policies retain 20 to 30 percent of students at key years (e.g., in Atlanta, 25 percent of first-graders were recently retained [Orfield, in this volume], with insufficient remediation offered to assist these students, no discernible sustained impact of learning, and dramatic, deleterious effects on dropout rates (Designs for Change, 1985; Massachusetts Advocacy for Children, 1987; New York City Board of Education, 1986). Testing programs often punish rather than diagnose (Gould, 1981; Madaus, 1985), and special-education programs invite increasing numbers to enter and few to leave (Biklin, 1988). High-school scheduling systems routinely prepare for a substantially diminished senior class survival rate (e.g., hygiene class, including sex education, was offered to students in their senior year at one New York City high school, instead of earlier, because fewer students would then need to be accommodated, compared to gym classes, which can hold up to fifty and were offered in ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades). High-school graduation exams today inform heretofore successful seniors that they are not entitled to a diploma (Orfield, in this volume), and bell-shaped grading curves sustain a "tradition" in competitive classrooms (Deutsch, 1979).

The structuring of inequity is so basic to education in the United States that programs that *do not* retain students are suspected of having poor standards; tests that *do not* discriminate are considered invalid; classrooms in which *all* can achieve are disparaged as illusion-producing; adolescents who value family or community over self are considered unmotivated; standards that *all* achieve are perceived as not being standards at all.

Let us explore one example of structured inequity that promotes dramatically inequitable outcomes—the tiered urban high-school system. Today many urban school districts have generated three- or four-tier high-school systems through which academic, magnet, and comprehensive schools layer students based on what are presumed to be inherent ability levels but closely parallel race and class divisions. This tiering, or "triage" (Hess, 1985), results in a disproportionately high percentage of low-income black and Hispanic youngsters attending comprehensive high schools where mean mathematics and reading scores of incoming students are approximately two levels below grade level. These students attend schools isolated from all but a few token peer role models who have clear college or work aspirations; they are isolated *in school* in ways that Wilson describes as the isolation of today's "ghetto underclass" (Neckerman and Wilson, in this volume). Remote from people and institutions that represent stability and continuity, these adolescents in comprehensive high schools are surrounded by adolescents equally disadvantaged by class and education. They have few images of attainable heroes/heroines and are deprived of the very institutions that support middle-class youths. Comprehensive high schools—which many now consider the "dumping grounds" of urban educational systems—are characterized by dropout rates in excess of 50 percent.

A study conducted by the Rev. Charles Kyle and his colleagues at DePaul University in Chicago dramatically illustrates the ways in which such systems ultimately make holding pens of their comprehensive high schools—contexts in which failure and dropout are normative. In their 1986 Report to the Chicago Board of Education and the Illinois Attorney General, Kyle and his colleagues tracked the differential dropout rates among Chicago's selective, vocational, nonselective integrated, and nonselective segregated high schools. They found that Chicago's selective high schools, attended by 7 percent of all high-school students, document a 15 percent dropout rate. Selective vocational schools document a 24 percent dropout rate. Nonselective integrated high schools lose 30 percent of their students, and nonselective segregated high schools—attended by 62 percent of Chicago's public high-school student body—document a 42 percent dropout rate (Kyle et al., 1986). The structuring of inequity is so pervasive and insidious that these tiers appear "fair" and "justified." Indeed the differential dropout rates, attendance figures, and test scores are used *post hoc* as evidence that the creation of these tiers and their maintenance through rigid entrance criteria are essential, rather than as evidence that this form of structured inequity permanently damages the educational, economic, and social fates of low-income youngsters.

The structuring of inequity not only operates on the "macro" level of education but also permeates the daily, negotiated practices of schooling. Take, for example, the ways in which social class or origin grossly and then insidiously affects a student's educational career.

The U.S. Department of Education reports that approximately 25 percent of adolescents nationwide do not graduate with a degree or diploma. Across racial and ethnic groups, only 8.9 percent of those in the wealthiest social class dropped out of the 1980 sophomore cohort followed in the U.S. Department of Education "High School and Beyond" data set (Kolstad and Ownings, 1986), compared to 22.3 percent of those in the poorest social class.

While many factors contribute to these differential rates, I can, by drawing on my ethnographic work inside a New York City public high school, easily see the subtle influence of class and race biases on judgments that fundamentally affect students' futures. Within four months, two similar incidents occurred. Rodney, a black, low-income adolescent, was suspended from his school and escorted into the juvenile justice system for the same offense for which Perry, a white, middle-class boy, was verbally "chastised" by local police. Rodney, at age sixteen, was accused of breaking and entering an apartment in Newark, New Jersey; and Perry, the son of a friend of mine, age fifteen, was found, with a group of friends, to have broken into a neighbor's house and stolen some beer in a suburban community in Connecticut.

Rodney spent the night in a juvenile facility, acquired a record, and was placed on probation after I testified on his behalf. Perry, on the other hand, was warned in the presence of his parents by local police, half-winking, half-serious, that this could lead to trouble, but that he and his friends would be let off this time. The workings of race and class bias allowed Rodney to be seen as launching a career in crime and Perry to be in the hold of teenage hormones, something he would grow out of because "boys will be boys." Social class and race constructed extremely different beginnings and, I suspect, ultimately different ends for these young men. Such is the very "naturalness" of the structuring of inequity.

This anecdote about Rodney and Perry confirms all too well the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS) analysis of Office for Civil Rights data (1986). Relying on national data from 1982, NCAS demonstrated that while blacks accounted for 16 percent of student enrollment, black students received 31 percent of suspensions, 28 percent of instances of corporal punishment, and only 8 percent of placements in gifted and talented programs. Conversely, whites, representing 71 percent of enrollment figures, accounted for only 59 percent of the suspensions. And the relationship between suspension and ultimate dropout is now well substantiated (Fine, forthcoming).

To illustrate the influence of class and race in the area of high-school discharge, I draw again from my year spent observing in a New York City high school. From September on, sitting in the attendance office and the dean's office, I witnessed a thoroughgoing disposal of adolescents who, for reasons of chronic cutting, talking back repeatedly, loitering, frequent absences, wearing headphones routinely, or accumulating numerous suspensions (see NCAS, 1986), were "allowed" to leave school or were "discharged" once they reached age seventeen. I spent a full year at this high school witnessing the routinization of dropping out. I often reflected on my own nephews who, in their white middle-class suburban public school, would have been referred to a school psychologist for some of the very same behavioral problems.

And beyond those who are pushed out in situations where race and class are explicitly operative, sitting in a public high school one notices the ease with which poor and working-class adolescents are allowed to leave high school. Note that this "choice" is almost never granted to middle-class, white adolescents. The early exit of adolescents I observed was considered voluntary, although they were rarely informed of the likely consequences of their "choices" (see even Chester Finn, [1987] on this point of "uninformed choices" at exit).

High dropout rates, by choice or not, signify the stuff of educational inequity and so deserve critical analysis. While students leave urban high schools through a variety of channels and with endless reasons, two patterns can be discerned—cumulative failure and spontaneous failure.

Many students who ultimately drop out fall into a pattern of cumulative failure early in their educations. This pattern was spelled out by the Massachusetts Advocacy Center (MAC) in a recent memo to Boston's Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laval Wilson. MAC predicted that if Boston's 1985–86 nonpromotion policies were to persist unmodified, up to 44 percent of fifth-graders, 85 percent of all eighth-graders, and 95 percent of black eighth-graders will have been retained at least once in their academic careers. As we know, turning these students around is no easy feat. Early retention with no effective remediation propels students into the cycle of cumulative failure—first feeling "tall," then embarrassed to be "sittin' next to my baby brother in class," and ultimately "stupid" and "out of place."

Other students are introduced *in secondary school* to educational failure, which ultimately aborts their high-school careers. An archival analysis across six years of a New York City cohort of 1,430 entering freshmen at the comprehensive high school where I conducted my field work revealed that only 13 percent of the original cohort, or 186 students, ultimately graduated from this high school. Eighty-seven percent had been discharged for being overage, to attend an auxiliary program, to enroll in GED preparation, to transfer, to work, or to continue a pregnancy. Conservatively estimated, a full 66 percent of the original 1,430 could be considered dropouts.

A closer analysis of *who dropped out* revealed a number of additional disturbing patterns. From a stratified random sample of the original 1,430 consisting of one-third dropouts, one-third graduates, and one-third transfers, we found that the experience of being retained in grade—even *independent of ability or achievement level*—substantially enhanced the likelihood of dropping out.

Of students in the ninth grade who had never been retained and were promoted to tenth, 73 percent went on to the tenth, 64 percent to the eleventh, and 48 percent to the twelfth. In comparison, of students who were retained once in the ninth grade, 46 percent went on to the tenth, 35 percent to the eleventh, and 20 percent to the twelfth. And of those retained twice in the ninth grade, 32 percent went to the tenth, 19 percent to eleventh, and only 6 percent to the twelfth. Being retained in the ninth grade almost doubled the likelihood that a student would not reach the tenth, and almost tripled the likelihood that she/he would not graduate.

The skeptical reader should be thinking, "This is no surprise; being retained is a proxy for low ability level. No causality can be discerned between retention and dropout because low ability mediates the statistical relationship." So let us examine the data only for those students who were reading and computing at the high-school level—grades 9 to 12.9. Here we find that while it is true that those retained were more likely to be below grade level than those promoted, nevertheless:

1. For this sample, almost half of the students retained in the ninth grade were reading/computing at or above grade level;
2. Almost 80 percent of those who had been retained never got to the twelfth grade; and
3. Of students reading/computing at the high-school level, 77 percent of *those never retained* ultimately graduated, 14 percent dropped out, and 9 percent transferred; whereas 46 percent of *those who had been retained* ultimately

> graduated, 31 percent dropped out, and 23 percent transferred. For high-school-level readers, being held back almost tripled the likelihood of dropping out of high school (11 percent of nonretained [n = 37] versus 39 percent of retained [n = 17]).

The stories to be told about the role of retention in institutionalizing educational inequity, then, number at least two. The first story illustrates how long-term cumulative failure breaks the minds and the souls of these youngsters and promotes high levels of underachievement, low self-esteem, truancy, and dropout rates.

But the other, equally disturbing and more spontaneous story of failure grows out of the high-school experience. This story tells of inequitable outcomes that are attributable to retention and suspension policies that punish students and offer no educational supports, and that affect low-income black and Hispanic students disproportionately.

Whether their experiences with failure were cumulative or spontaneous, students whom I interviewed who had dropped out left high school with energy, vision, and commitment to make something better of themselves (Fine, 1986). Most were eager to earn a GED, join the military, or attend a proprietary school. None, in my experience, was informed by a teacher or counselor that in New York the failure rate on the GED exam was nearly 50 percent (and this was before written essays were added); that the military does not accept female dropouts; that undereducated males are unlikely to pass the military aptitude exam and that those dropouts who do enter the military are more likely than any other group to receive a less-than-honorable discharge within six months; or that many proprietary schools, at least in New York City, have a reputation for not fulfilling promises of jobs and training, for encouraging three-time attendance (after which they can receive a full semester or year of tuition whether or not the student completes the term), and for false advertising and unethical recruitment practices. Indeed, I interviewed one young woman who had been recruited by a proprietary business academy to go through the housing projects and get friends to sign up for the program. I paid another young woman to interview at a beauty academy, posing as a dropout—and she was so thoroughly seduced that she admitted that she would have, if vulnerable and indeed a dropout, seriously considered signing up, particularly when the recruiter invited her to "just give me a deposit of $25 so then we can tell your mother that you have already reserved a spot. Then taking out a loan won't be such a big deal" (Fine, 1987).

The "choice" to leave high school is substantially more available to those least advantaged, to those most likely to be exploited by private "educational" business interests, and to those most hurt by the absence of a degree. The widespread availability of this "choice" for low-income adolescents is a painful reminder that the structuring of inequity requires no bad guys in school, no malevolence. Yet the spawning and recommending of these alternatives, which may be entirely well-intentioned, reap substantially inequitable outcomes by race, class, and gender.

I leave the structures of inequity for a moment to present a brief analysis of *silencing,* those processes that mute and marginalize the voices of critique and dissent, which could be converted into school-based creativity and innovation. The silencing of these voices only preserves schools as closed institutions of inequity.

MUTING THE VOICES OF CRITIQUE

As among the most critical students who dropped out in the South Bronx, in public schools the critic is often silenced, sometimes banished, frequently humiliated into reticence (Fine, 1986). Alternatively, honors students are more likely to be invited to participate and to be innovative and critical. Those encouraged to have an independent voice in class are often the ones who have demonstrated their ability to ape appropriate language, dialect, dress, and views. They are invited to voice opinions, to chance creativity, and to offer critique. Not so in most remedial or special-education classes, in which memorization, repetition, and the authority of the teacher are the norm. One often wonders if students are tracked by ability or by the willingness to withhold critical thoughts. What is called academic ability level often parallels who can speak freely and whose discourse is controlled (Cummins, 1986).

If silencing is about who can and who cannot speak, it is also about what can and cannot be spoken. Inside public schools, particularly low-income public schools, there persists a systemic commitment *not to name* those aspects of social life or of schooling that activate social anxieties—particularly anxieties of teachers and administrators who are often from different social classes, racial and ethnic groups, and neighborhoods than the children they teach. With important moments of exception, school-based silencing precludes conversation about social controversy and social inequity (Fine, 1987).

When I asked a white teacher why she does not discuss racism in her classroom of black and Hispanic students, I was told, "It would demoralize the children." When I asked the principal why he preferred that I not mention dropping out to students I interviewed, he replied, "If you say it, they will do it." And when I asked administrators at the New York City Board of Education why they would not disaggregate dropout statistics by social class, race, or ethnicity, I was told, "That would reflect racism." (This practice has recently been reformed.)

Silencing occurs when local and remote voices—dropouts, advocates, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals—remain unheard. Uninvited dissent on the part of parents, guardians, or community leaders is muted or appropriated (Connell et al., 1982). Some parents are discouraged entirely from attending and monitoring their children's schools. Most are denied legal and social information critical to an improved school-community relationship.

In the attendance office, mothers must negotiate their right to a letter for welfare, being ever diplomatic when their needed letter is held hostage to their child's poor attendance, fearing always that speaking out will further jeopardize their child's education. Here we see mothers, and sometimes fathers, who are neither passive nor uncaring, only strategists, ever suspect of schools' invitations to "get involved."

When urban public schools extend themselves to parents and initiate dialogue or relationships with parents and community, these relationships are rarely reciprocal and are never about sharing power. Sessions *for* parents *by* school districts, designed to increase parental involvement, may include "how to love the unlovable child" or "dealing with a latch key adolescent" but much less often "your legal rights in special-education placement" or "knowing when your child can and cannot be legally discharged from high school." School-community relations are rarely bilateral in low-income communities. How often do teachers or principals visit community churches or community centers, or provide empowering legal information to these constituencies? Let me remind you again that these are precisely the kinds of strategies employed by public schools to encourage parental participation in middle-class neighborhoods.

Finally, silencing mutes those who dream—children like Tony, who explained, "You know, when you're young, real little, you have dreams. You imagine endless possibilities for your life. Little by little school chips away at your dreams. Everything is postponed. They tell you elementary school prepares you for junior high, which prepares you for senior high, which prepares you for college, which prepares you for life. I was having life at fourteen and wanted out to fulfill my dreams and not have them stepped on!" Tony, who dropped out at sixteen to become an actor, had a walk-on part in one television advertisement. When I last saw him, he was working as a bellhop at a Manhattan hotel.

CURRICULAR AND PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES THAT PATHOLOGIZE STRENGTH

The last category of elements that contribute to the institutionalization of educational inequity includes curricular and pedagogical strategies that create pathology out of student and community strength. Students, including those considered at risk, bring skills, experiences, talents, energies, critiques, and dreams to school. But they often "don't fit" and are considered problematic, reminders of a so-called "underclass" with features to be corrected. To illustrate the process of pathologizing students' strengths, we will examine a social strategy characteristic of low-income adolescents but counter-normative of school practice.

Low-income youngsters, particularly females, embody a strong *commitment to the collective*—be it a neighborhood, a family, a relationship, or a gang. When instructed to work in a group, low-income adolescents in one comprehensive high school were far more reliable and productive than when instructed to work individually or competitively—a clear reversal of middle-class adolescents' fetish about competition. Yet low-income students are often punished in school for their cooperative bent.

I am reminded of a story told by anthropologist Jules Henry of a class of children in which the teacher asked students to publicly "correct" another student (1965). The arms of most classmates waved anxiously in an effort to please. Henry comments, however, that Zuni, Hopi, and Dakota Indian children would not participate in such a competitive display. Refusing to humiliate another child, they would be invested in cooperation, willing to assist but not to upstage.

In the dominant United States culture, motivations of individualism and competition are systematically privileged over cooperation (see Blaney et al., 1977; Deutsch, 1979). Yet low-income adolescents reside in a world in which relationships, networks, and kin are privileged over self. Take, for example, the story of Luisa. Luisa dropped out of high school to care for a sick grandmother. When I asked her guidance counselor why a social worker was not contacted, I was told, "Luisa got overinvolved." An extremely caring woman whose job it was to do all she could to keep Luisa and perhaps 800 other students in school, this guidance counselor viewed Luisa's withdrawal from school as a mistake, evidence of her lack of commitment to education. She further explained, "All 3,200 kids here need a social worker." Even the best-intentioned counselor needs to "define . . . limits. I can't do it all for these kids," she said. So in the meantime, Luisa dropped out. What low-income and poor students care about—in this case family well-being (a throwback to the children of immigrants of the early twentieth century)—surfaces as a problem that schools struggle against, rather than as a resource to be tapped, praised, or nurtured.

The pathologizing of strength emerges most powerfully in schools' response to the parents and communities of low-income students. Today popular education rhetoric seems not to blame the students but to blame their families, at least in low-income and poor communities. One hears over and over again, in response to the question "Why do so many students fail?" the popular refrains—"The parents," "Children having children," "These kids are raising themselves." In my interviews I saw very little evidence of lack of concern from these parents, and in my school-based work I saw equally little evidence that schools as institutions were deeply interested in finding out what these parents did know, care about, and want for their children. Teachers and administrators, at least at the high-school level in overcrowded schools, often had no information about parents beyond uninformed stereotypes and folklore. Meetings with parents were often limited to those moments when a child was about to be thrown out of school or placed on disciplinary "contract." And then knowledge gathered was unfortunately reduced to parental markers of social class, race/ethnicity, clothing, style, and dialect. Whereas in middle-class districts parents and community leaders are the persons to whom the school is accountable, in low-income districts parents and community leaders are, in the aggregate (with notable exceptions), ignored or considered a liability to the school—persons to be managed, worked around, excluded, and/or "helped" in ways the school defines as necessary. While some educators were sincerely interested, energetic, and forthcoming with parents, the prevailing school posture portrayed these parents as essentially problematic. And this sentiment was all too clear to those parents and guardians.

I witnessed a young girl thrown out of high school after she was involved in a fight with another girl. Her grandmother signed the discharge papers as the law required. A few months later I visited this young woman at home to interview her about "dropping out." Her grandmother was present. I asked her why she did not fight for her granddaughter's right to an education through to graduation. She answered: "Look at me! You think they would listen to me? You think they'd be any good to my baby if I spoke up and let them know what I think?" And so she knew what I knew but did not want to admit. Indeed, she was not the community to whom that school saw itself as accountable.

In the aggregate, and again there were important exceptions, the parents and communities of low-income students, particularly of black and Hispanic students, are viewed as irrelevant to schooling, as an obstacle to overcome, or as a context out of which to be upwardly mobile. This view on the part of teachers and administrators has serious consequences for the way students themselves view academic success. Listen to the words of Mallory, who read at the twelfth-grade level in the tenth grade, the year she dropped out:

> Maybe I was just scared that I *would* make it out there; outside of Harlem. And white people would treat me like they always do—with suspicion. Did you feel unwanted when you came up here to Harlem the way whites make me feel when we go to their neighborhoods?—Up here everybody loves me, and when I leave I'm alone without my momma, or my friends. Life ain't easy in Harlem but bein' black and alone in white people's restaurants or neighborhoods, that don't sound so good either . . .

I heard teachers threaten students, often sincerely trying to "motivate": "You act like that and you will end up on welfare." What does this statement mean to a youngster raised on and humiliated by the meager and inadequate allowance of AFDC and food stamps? The welfare system was not examined in class as a social policy in need of critical analysis. The fact that many youngsters received some form of welfare was either neglected or viewed as problematic. While many students were survivors of a system that does not work—indeed experts in "working the system"—their experiences were deemed irrelevant.

Before we leave this analysis of institutionalized educational inequity to imagine what could be, let us pause to remember the sobering words of Kenneth Clark, a man who committed his professional life to de-institutionalizing educational inequity. In his retirement speech after twenty years on the New York State Board of Regents, Dr. Clark began his remarks as follows: "I am ashamed that I have not made education any better for black youngsters today than it was twenty years ago when I began. Perhaps I should have shouted more, not been so mild-mannered." He too felt the pressure to mute his critical voice, and institutionalized inequity persisted. The task before you is enormous, radical, and imperative.

DE-INSTITUTIONALIZING EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY

If we presume that the institutionalizing of educational inequity produces individual and societal costs we are no longer willing to tolerate (Catterrall, 1986) and that as educators we are committed to de-institutionalizing educational inequity, we are obligated to imagine what could be. Before doing that, however, let us first reflect on the limits of our dreams.

1. Changes in education without accompanying changes in the economy, local labor markets, job training, child care, health care, housing, confidential abortion and contraceptive services for adolescents, and welfare policies are not likely to yield dramatic change in prevailing economic arrangements.
2. Changes in education that occur independent of political movements, community involvement, and teacher and paraprofessional empowerment are also doomed to have limited impact.
3. We must understand the contradictory social and economic realities that construct the lives and minds of working-class and poor children. When I asked Ronald, "Why do you stay in school?" he explained, "Because every morning when I come to school I see this drunk sleeping in the subway and I think 'not me.' Then I think 'I bet he has a high-school diploma.' "

Such are the realities that haunt these adolescents. Their descriptions are not "cop-outs" or ways to avoid responsibility, but portraits of a complex and paradoxical set of social circumstances. These circumstances are not addressed by the school rhetoric "Stay in school and you'll get a good job." Nor are they allayed by the street rhetoric "Drop out now. What good is staying in school doing you?" Indeed these adolescents need a place—a public, safe, and uncontaminated sphere—to discuss and analyze the contradictory messages and realities that confront them and their kin. To deny these contradictions is to lose a generation of young men and women.

It is important for us to keep asking, how would federal and state governments respond if 50 to 70 percent of white affluent students dropped out of high school? Would they increase promotional standards, toughen testing and standardization, cut access to school lunches, reduce students' access to "alternative" (e.g., women's studies, black studies, Hispanic studies) courses, and make it tougher to graduate? Or would they reassess the policies, structures, and practices of education, recognizing the dropout rate as a marker of a system destroying children's minds, spirits, and imaginations?

What would they do if white affluent youths were employed at approximately 50 percent, with or without a degree, as black youths are in major urban areas? What would they do if white college graduates were unemployed at approximately the same rates as black high-school dropouts, as is true in the reverse? How can educators and psychologists persist in the belief that dropping out evidences depression and irrationality, an adolescent lack of motivation, or a *misreading* of the opportunity structure?

Let us imagine what could be, rather than drowning in the depressive portrait of what is. What could be are public schools that nurture social critique and activism while facilitating the development of critical workers, citizens, friends, and family members. While I agree with my colleagues, in particular Henry Levin, that reform must begin in the early grades, I am equally convinced that even at high school it is not too late for the majority of urban adolescents who will drop out unless you do something radical for them. Interventions need to be initiated at precisely those institutional moments in which educational inequity is bred: structural arrangements, processes of silencing, and practices of pathologizing students and their communities. Below are a sampling of interventions that are possible, desirable, and even do-able in the 1980s.

STRUCTURAL INTERVENTIONS

Schools must be small enough in actual size and/or divided into "houses" to hear the voices of individual and collective students who can feel known, recognized, and participatory as members of a community (Foley and Crull, 1984). Schools should be integrated by race/ethnicity, class, gender, and ability levels—not only for abstract principles of justice but also because social learning toward participatory and critical citizenship should be a goal of public education. Comprehensive high schools cannot become the dumping ground for those left over from the pickings of the academic-elite and magnet schools; likewise, elite white students cannot be allowed to participate in segregated public schools that promote (if inadvertently) racist stereotypes (Hess, 1985).

Public-school curricula and associated pedagogies should be infused richly by empowered teachers and paraprofessionals, not made "teacherproof," rigidly standardized, or paced so that educators are demoted to implementers rather than recognized as creative professionals (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985; Giroux and McLaren, 1986; North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, 1986).

In addition, school-based health clinics should be available for educational, counseling, diagnostic, and intervention purposes—to allow students to talk and ask questions; to identify health problems; to intervene and prescribe contraceptives, including condoms; and to refer for abortion counseling those who are engaging in sexual intercourse whether we like it or not (Dryfoos, 1985).

We need public schools that want to keep their students until they graduate, not just until the budget figures are accounted; that are concerned when youngsters arrive at the attendance office to drop out; that provide serious informed consent, options, and follow-up for those who are nevertheless leaving (Fine, 1986); and that establish "second chance" programs to invite back those students who, after two months on the streets, find that "there aren't many good jobs out here, and a GED is hard to get" (La Raza, 1986a).

Finally, in the structural realm, we need schools linked with meaningful and nontraditional vocational training. Many summer and year-round programs have demonstrated themselves to be highly effective with marginal students—stemming the summer loss, enhancing academic skills, and stretching vocational aspirations (see Williams and Kornblum, 1985).

DE-SILENCING COMMUNITIES OF STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND ADVOCATES

Beyond structural change, we need schools that enable the expression of voice. These institutions should be influenced powerfully and carefully by advocates and community-based groups who speak for inclusion, not exclusion; characterized by pedagogies that elicit diverse student views, invite wide participation by teachers, students, parents, and advocates, and recognize multiple "realities," not single authoritative truths (e.g., "Why does he ask our opinions when he's gonna tell us the 'right' answer?"); schools in which the joys and difficulties of labor are learned and analyzed critically, in which the perspectives of management and workers are presented as problematic, not "given" (Anyon, 1980). We need schools in which the structures of class, race, gender, and disability stratification, the stigmatization of sexual minorities, the politics of gentrification, the drama of domestic violence, and the details of drug sales and arrests, tenant organizing, and AIDS funding are the substance of social studies, science, English, and even mathematics classes, rather than being excluded from the curriculum, segregated into a large-scale and chaotic assembly, or identified as appropriate for mention only in the secluded office of the school counselor (if she/he can be found). (See Perlez, 1987, May 24, p. 24, for an example of such a curriculum.) We need schools in which meaningful programs can flourish, such as the Teen History Project, sponsored by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, in which a small group of urban adolescents were invited to access rare archival documents to construct a cross-class and cross-race history of adolescence in the United States.

Part of de-silencing means letting students acknowledge their strengths as well as their problems. Here I would include the establishment of interventions in which community-based organizations, through the provision of health, social services, housing, welfare, and child-care services and information, work with schools to assist adolescents, particularly females, with their concerns so that they do not have to become the social workers for their families.

These programs need to be tied to the workings of school. Special arrangements can then be made for the student who needs time off and then needs encouragement to come back. Information about students' concerns and problems can be fed back, confidentially, from program to school. Curricula can be altered to address these issues. Teachers and counselors can be informed so that the "personal problems" of students, which distribute across race, class, and gender (e.g., health concerns, domestic violence, drugs, family relations, sexuality, and the like) but disproportionately disrupt the lives of low-income adolescents, can be introduced into classrooms as *social* issues and added to the curriculum of social studies, English, and science rather than psychologized in counselors' offices, inflating caseloads and reinforcing the myth, in the minds of adolescents, that they are alone with their troubles.

In school, counselors and social workers can begin to use adolescent culture to invite students to work together—to conduct a needs assessment of health concerns in their community; to construct an "Adolescents' Yellow Pages" of resources for quality and confidential health care; or to organize a "Speak Out" around the inadequacies of health-care services in their communities. In this way the community-based organizations would not only be helping individuals but would also be empowering adolescents to work for and with themselves, each other, their kin, and their communities.

RECOGNIZING STUDENT AND COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Public schools, if they are to sincerely strive toward equitable outcomes, need to team up with community-based educational advocates who can critique, monitor, and transform public schools. One suggestion might involve community-based advocates located inside schools, but not accountable to those schools, who meet with every adolescent prior to his/her discharge for a thorough discussion of options and follow-up.

Schools might link with communities by lending their space and/or equipment on evenings and weekends, by providing educational services for parents *qua* parents or parents *qua* adults, and/or by sponsoring educational projects that focus on community organizing or improvement.

The West Philadelphia MOVE project involves a set of high-school students, including some considered at risk, working on a Department-of-Labor-funded effort to rehabilitate a house in West Philadelphia. In the process the students are sharpening their skills in mathematics, social studies, and science (personal communication, Ira Harkavey, 1987). Likewise, Career Explorations, a program initially cosponsored by Hunter College's Community Health Program and the

Coalition of 100 Black Women, was designed to provide high-school students with summer experiences of work and academic learning and to enhance a sense of community among peers and in their neighborhoods (personal communication, Nick Freudenberg, 1986).

Why can we not offer all ninth-graders the opportunity to do what I did—to conduct community-wide oral histories in which they interview brothers, sisters, neighbors, political leaders, tenant organizers, health-care providers, babysitters, grandmothers, the man who runs the grocery, the now-convicted drug dealer, the teen mother, clergy, and the woman who runs the church youth group about education, politics, and the economy? The knowledge of community and individual needs that rises from these interviews can be recycled into the curriculum of public schools. Public schools cannot be isolated from, much less fortressed against, students' communities.

To draw on students' commitment to the collective and to engender a sense of community within the school, classroom-based strategies should incorporate new understandings of cooperative learning techniques (Blaney et al., 1977; Cummins, 1986; Lockheed, 1986; Slavin, 1980). Through the creation of small, meaningful communities inside schools, even marginal students come to feel connected, respected, and heard (Foley and Crull, 1984). Stereotypes can be reduced, cross-race/ethnic friendships nurtured, and social learning toward critical and participatory citizenship practiced.

Currently, there is a series of projects sponsored nationally that explores parental involvement as a means to reduce dropout and at-risk rates. The National Committee for Citizens in Education has received funds to generate parental empowerment as a vehicle to strengthen school-community relations and ultimately reduce dropout rates. The Children's Defense Fund has taken as its goal of the next five to ten years the reduction of teen pregnancy in selected communities through parental and adolescent empowerment programs. The Beethoven Housing Project in Chicago, the site of an exciting comprehensive infusion of education and services into a concentrated low-income neighborhood, has incorporated parental involvement as key to the reduction of teen pregnancy, truancy, and dropout rates in that community.

As parental and community involvement grow fashionable, we see early attempts at the integration of school and community emanating from advocacy, church, and community-based organizations. It is time for schools to initiate meaningful and collaborative relationships with the communities they allege to serve.

THE ROLE OF THE CHIEFS

What can be done at the state level? This question has nagged me throughout the summer. My work and educational beliefs reside at the level of individual schools in their complex community contexts. I have not had much confidence in state or national policies as the major site of educational reform or intervention. Having spent a year in a high school watching practice as it deviates from policy, I have grown somewhat suspect of any policy generated by people who are remote from the scene of practice. Yet enormous changes at the local level are attributable to federal legislation for disabled children, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 which has virtually eliminated explicitly gender-segregated education, and the Supreme Court decision for desegregated public schools.

And so I do have some recommendations for you and your staffs, although I probably have more to say about what you should not do than what I think you should do.

If schools are to nurture students who grow up to be critical and participatory citizens, we need . . .

1. *Empowerment of teachers and paraprofessionals*

Data from a study conducted in the early 1980s (Fine, 1983) suggest that teachers and counselors who feel they have no voice in policymaking or school decisions tend to disparage students, consider them unteachable, hold them personally responsible for failure, and consider themselves powerless to effect change institutionally or individually.

On the other hand, those teachers and counselors who see themselves as involved in decision making and policy setting have a sense of their ability to effect institutional change and view students as able to change, and students' problems as externally generated and modifiable. A sense of voice goes a long way in the field of education.

Today we witness educational policies, in the name of progress and reform, that essentially disempower teachers and counselors. Need I list "teacherproof" curricula, "teacher blind" diagnostic devices, and the structural buttressing of rigid school hierarchies and centralization that overemphasize the voices of superintendents and principals while muting those of teachers and paraprofessionals.

These so-called reforms will likely force smart and creative people out of the system, underground, and/or into isolation. They will cost the field of education in ideas and educational strategies that are best generated by those who work directly with students. And they will ultimately harm the students who inherit the low morale and sense of powerlessness of the adults around them.

Perhaps the teachers, counselors, and paraprofessionals who leave the field of education are not unlike the South Bronx students who left their high school. The ones who were creative and critical took initiative when they needed to get out of a system they felt was strangling them. Structurally and financially we must support teachers and paraprofessionals and *not* contribute to the deskilling of their work.

2. *Desegregation of teachers by race/ethnicity and students by race/ethnicity, social class, and disability levels*

We can no longer tolerate schools segregated by race/ethnicity, social class, or disability levels. Not only is it destructive to erect tiered urban schools in which the bottom tier consists almost exclusively of low-income, "low-skill" students of color, but it is equally damaging to allow white students of the middle class to attend school with only other white students of the middle class. In such contexts, their social educations are systematically aborted; their sense of racial superiority and their social apathy are reinforced; and their notions that wealth and poverty are independent phenomena attributable to inherent characteristics of the rich and the poor are justified.

In the educational lawsuit mentioned earlier, in which I testified as expert witness, one of my arguments held that public schooling in a context in which students and faculty are almost exclusively white and middle class is essentially inadequate education if our goal is to build critical, sensitive, and participatory citizens. Sessions on reducing prejudice are not enough. To learn not to say "nigger" or "kike" or "faggot" is not the same as to engage collectively in educational tasks of social significance with people of differing racial/ethnic and class backgrounds. To learn about difference, and therefore about sameness and about self, requires equal status and cooperative interaction, not merely abstract "sensitivity training." Educational segregation is bad for the health of those poor black and Hispanic children who were acknowledged in court thirty years ago, but it is equally polluting for the minds of white low-income and middle-class children who are being trained, passively and uncritically, in the ways of racism and segregation through their public schools.

As a footnote, let me mention (with worry) the creative use of "private tuition plans" in the 1980s to resegregate now integrated school districts. I encourage each of you to investigate these policies as they operate within public schools in your state, ultimately subverting integration by creaming off white and middle-class black students from integrated districts and placing them in more "exclusive" districts.

In the "white and privileged" school involved in this lawsuit, almost 100 of the 800 students were out-of-district, private-tuition students; and yet this school continued to be considered a public school. It is difficult to encourage good citizenship among those who have been allowed to "buy out" of integration and buy into the exclusivity of an expensive, white, and privileged public high school. And yet, as you can imagine, courses on South Africa, tutoring programs into local "poor areas," and sensitivity training were abundant at this school. Training for good citizenship was pervasive, but decidedly remote.

3. *Curricula and pedagogy that value students and their communities and recognize social inequities as problematic and worthy of academic investigation*

We need educational pedagogies and curricula that speak to the lives of students themselves, that address in social studies, mathematics, English, science, and health the issues of race, gender, social class, disability, language minorities, and sexual orientation as social and civil-rights issues, not as "add-ons" in an otherwise mainstream set of courses on the lives of white, nondisabled, heterosexual men as though these lives were "truth" and the rest of us "deviants."

4. *Advocacy and community voice*

The perspectives of community members, parents, and advocates must be heard within schools and within your work. Neither you nor I can assume to know what is inherently best for a community of which we are not a part. Parents in low-income neighborhoods, like parents in upper-income neighborhoods, but maybe even more, care about their children's education. To deny this fact is to preserve *our* power at the expense of the education of these youths. Their mothers, fathers, guardians, and community leaders need to be our allies in the struggle to figure out what works for these youngsters in their communities. To write off these youths, their parents, guardians, community leaders, and/or advocates is to cede the education of this generation to the streets, and then to hold these children responsible for their own failure.

If we are to generate high schools that support those students who most need support, as well as those who need the least, we must implement what may be considered "radical" interventions (as we remember that sex-integrated gym classes, sex education, and boys in home economics used to be considered radical interventions). And so we must . . .

1. *Establish school-based health clinics*

Let me move to the center of controversy and clearly state that school-based health clinics that provide health services for all students, including sexuality counseling, contraceptive information, and abortion counseling for those students in need, are a must. The evidence coming in from Baltimore, Minneapolis, and other sites across the country is incredibly encouraging. The school-based clinics do not appear to facilitate the onset of heterosexual intercourse; indeed, they may stall it by some months. The clinics do not promote multiple partners; rather, students seem more responsible once they are "equipped" to be responsible. The clinics do reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and dropout rates, as well as low birth-weight babies for those young women who continue their pregnancies (Zabin et al., 1986). Polling evidence suggests that the perhaps silent majority of adults supports these clinics, while the vocal and affluent minority, known as the "Moral Majority," opposes them. We must remember that the constituency to whom we are responsible is the children.

2. *Reconsider retention and promotion policies*

On the issue of retention and promotion policies, I again have some advice that goes against present trends. Current evidence from New York, Chicago, and Boston demonstrates that promotion policies swell the ranks of dropouts but do not contribute substantially to the learning of students retained. A simple retention policy, as currently implemented, usually punishes students without providing supports, transforming pedagogy, or altering educational contexts. In such cases, the second time around the student is likely to feel no better off than the first, especially if she/he now feels tall, awkward, and ultimately stupid.

Educators must be more creative than to pit social versus merit promotions against each other. We must experiment with transition classes, individualized progress, summer programs, substantially modified pedagogies, curriculum in-class tutors, peer tutoring, and a system such as the one recommended in New York, in which students progress not according to grade *per se* but accumulate credits and graduate when a sufficient number have been earned. We cannot afford to forfeit another generation of students to a policy because it blows well in the winds of excellence.

3. *Analyze suspension practices*

So too with suspensions. We must consider alternatives to out-of-school suspensions, which merely remove "the problem" for a time—disproportionately the black and Hispanic "problem"—and then allow these students to return to a more hostile and discouraging environment. They are almost assured of failing for the semester and may then be propelled into the cycle of cumulative failure (Fine, 1987).

It is incumbent upon you to analyze school-based policies such as retention, promotion, graduation, and suspension as they differentially affect students by social class, race/ethnicity, gender, and/or disability. We must analyze differences in terms of opportunities available to students and outcomes experienced by students, and we must respond effectively and courageously when evidence of disproportionate, adverse effect is apparent.

4. *Establish broad-based community support programs*

We need to install at or near public high schools what I call "Velcro" programs—those community-based programs for health, welfare, housing, child care, etc., that are literally or organizationally attached to schools and are designed to help students get their personal lives together and assist with family problems. Child-care programs, for example, can keep teenaged mothers and fathers in school and can enable their children to receive the kinds of preschool education that most middle-class children receive.

Educators today describe "family problems" as a major cause of dropping out. Yet we accept this fact as an unfortunate reality for low-income youths, allowing a generation of responsible adolescents—those willing to sacrifice their own education for the well-being of their kin and those too poor to get a social worker or counselor to help—to be forgotten educationally and economically.

I would argue that inadequate and discouraging schools, in particular, allow family problems to rise to the surface in ways that overwhelm and therefore encourage students to leave. In compelling and supportive school environments, buttressed by support programs that acknowledge students' lives holistically (Foley and Crull, 1984), students who encounter family problems often turn *to* the school, not *away from* the school, for help. We need to create such contexts and opportunities for assistance and not punish those students who are sufficiently responsible and unselfish to notice and attend to the needs of their kin.

If state policies are to recognize students as your primary constituency, then . . .

1. *Evaluate educational policies and practices for discriminatory opportunities and outcomes*

You must establish research that evaluates existing policies and procedures (e.g., retention, promotion, suspension, special education, home instruction, "pregnancy schools," tiered high schools) for their impact on students differentially by race/ethnicity, gender, social class, and ability level. Make the findings available publicly and hold small, public conversations with teachers, paraprofessionals, advocates, parents, students, dropouts, and community groups about the discrepancies that emerge in the data and about interventions that could minimize these discrepancies.

2. *Monitor military and proprietary school programs that recruit students out of high school*

Investigate in your state the nature of military presence (and equal time for peace activists) and recruitment in public high schools; the marketing practices and placement outcomes of state-accredited and nonaccredited proprietary schools; and GED programs designed to assist students who have left the public school system.

3. *Abolish educational policies that punish without supports*

Remove from the books all policies and procedures that *punish* students for failure but *provide no remediation* to assist them in achieving better.

4. *De-tier urban schools*

Create high-school systems that are either entirely magnet-based (as is being tried in Kansas City) or heterogeneous but not stratified in ways that sacrifice the majority for the minority. In New York City, revisions are now in place to modify entrance requirements to the theme high schools. Advocates have called for fully random selection, enough magnet schools to meet the demand, and more equitable and representative distribution of students in these schools by race/ethnicity and social class.

5. *Generate funding formulas that support at-risk youths*

We need to generate funding formulas that create incentives to bring back truants and dropouts, as in the Second Chance programs. Such formulas should not punish a school that meets with success, nor should they punish those schools that continue to confront failure in the face of trying to solve the problem.

6. *Reduce school and class size*

To hark back to a familiar, if strongly resisted, notion, we need to have smaller schools and classes. Students in academic trouble hide in the back of the large classroom. In an overcrowded setting, Patrice, a black girl who in each class wore her hat, coat, and a Walkman, placed her head on the desk, and uttered not a word, was experienced by teachers as a gift, not a problem. We need to create classrooms in which Patrice is recognized as an untapped but troubled resource who needs encouragement and assistance, not a student to be ignored until she "chooses" to drop out.

As we de-institutionalize inequity and move schools toward empowerment, we must pose critical questions about whom the excellence rhetoric is obscuring. What is being hidden, and whose lives are being destroyed in the process? Recently I asked an administrator in a major urban school district how his district would evaluate their newly instituted promotion policy, how they will know if it "works." He confided in me: "I don't expect it to work . . . there are a million caveats built in so that both merit and social promotions are inevitable." He predicted that the "whole thing will blow over as soon as this excellence business dies down" and regretted that "a generation of city youngsters will be sacrificed in the meantime."

The concern with excellence hides the depth of our social and educational problems. The concept "at-risk" obscures the systematic nature of undereducation, of "pushing" students out, and of mislabeling youngsters. It deceptively locates the problem in the individual students, their families, and their communities rather than in the structural realities that constrain their educational, social, and economic lives.

Let me suggest that we reframe educational reform to take seriously empowerment, collectivity, voice, and community. Dropouts and at-risk youth in this country demand a systematic, radical response—not programmatic shifts that merely tinker with the problem; not programs that assume the naturalness of academic hierarchies that parallel social class, ability level, gender, and race differences; not projects that banish social critique and activism, but rather those that nurture them.

Responsibility for the dropout problem lies broadly within and beyond schools. Responsibility for initiating solutions lies narrowly, however, within schools. The challenge lies with us as educators and advocates.

In the name of excellence and "reform," we have kept silent and colluded in "kitsch" at the expense of a generation of educational victims.

In the name of providing modest and atomized programs for at-risk youth, we have deformed the problem and the solution, diverting attention away from social, economic, and educational structures stacked against these young women and men.

Let us appropriate the crisis of the dropout as a moment of resistance and critique, as an opportunity to listen to the students, their parents, guardians, teachers, and paraprofessionals—and to the critics—and to radically alter the nature of the relationship between school and community, educational and social/political arrangements, education, and empowerment. If we accomplish this, we will have dismantled substantially the barriers to serving an "at-risk" society and contributed significantly to the education of a critical and democratic populace.

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AT-RISK CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

Educational Challenges and Opportunities in Serving Limited-English-Proficient Students

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I. INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no area of educational policy has been as controversial for as long a period of time as efforts to fashion appropriate educational programs for children of limited English proficiency (LEP). Policymakers and educators have disagreed, sometimes vehemently, about the purpose of education for this group of children, and even where there is consensus as to the ends, there are disagreements about the means. The lack of experience of most local educators with special language-assistance programs and the scarcity of extra resources for new curricula and training have sometimes led educators to feel overwhelmed by the task.

Perhaps most significantly, the fact that the preferred method of student assistance in the last two decades has involved the use of English and non-English languages—bilingual education—has also added fuel to the fire, since the debate has been complicated by individuals' varying beliefs about the role of English as a common language. Fears that public use of languages other than English may reduce the willingness of LEP individuals to learn English and thereby threaten the role of English as our common language have led in the last few years to a tremendous backlash against the use of bilingual education and have caused a language debate or movement focused on emotion and ideology rather than pedagogy. Emerging as it has on the heels of tremendous demographic change in some regions of the country—California, for example, is projected to be a majority-minority state by the year 2000—part of this movement has its roots in fear of the changing complexion and composition of the nation as more non-European immigrants make their homes among us and as the Hispanic population of the United States continues to grow.

The increasing politicization of educational programs for LEP students has caught many educators by surprise as vociferous opponents have charged that educational interventions to serve a small proportion of children in a school district undermine the English language and foster social disunity. Several extremely well-financed national organizations have arisen in the last few years to protect the supremacy of the English language and do battle against "creeping bilingualism," which is embodied primarily, their supporters claim, in bilingual education and bilingual ballots. Unfortunately, along with an attack on this particular instructional approach, many of these groups have also challenged the prevailing notion of the purpose of education for LEP children. As redefined by English-only advocates, the only purpose of schooling for LEP children is to teach them English. Comprehensive schooling for these children is to be deferred until they have gained proficiency in English. The fundamental differences are thus not only about method but also about purpose.

The nature of the debate has tended to polarize advocates and opponents and drive the discussion further and further away from how best to provide a full and equitable education for LEP children. Small wonder that practical needs and pedagogical concerns have been submerged in the flood of this debate. Yet the numbers of limited-English-proficient children continue to grow, and our schools have a more pressing obligation than ever to find comprehensive and effective ways to educate LEP students.

Although this paper will acknowledge these political and emotional issues and attempt to place them in historical and legal context, its primary focus will be on describing the LEP population and the educational challenges facing these students. It will also include a discussion of some of the essential components of any type of effective educational program designed for LEP students and an examination of the role of state departments of education in the effort to ensure high-quality services to this population.

II. CHILDREN AT RISK: DEFINITIONS AND NUMBERS

NON-ENGLISH-LANGUAGE-BACKGROUND PERSONS

Children from non-English-language backgrounds can be found in virtually every state in the union, in United States territories, and in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. These children include American Indians, the nation's first residents, as well as her newest immigrants. Children from non-English-language backgrounds are both citizens and noncitizens, children of immigrants and children of native-born Americans.

While English attained de facto status as our national common language in colonial times, our "nation of immigrants" has always included Americans whose mother tongue was other than English. Many non-English-language-background (NELB) persons did not immigrate to the United States, but rather the United States—through territorial expansion, purchase of land, or treaty of war—came to them. This has been the case for American Indians, Puerto Ricans, many Mexican Americans in the Southwest, and some Pacific Islanders.

In 1980 the United States Census Bureau counted approximately 30 million persons with non-English-language backgrounds. These individuals constituted about 14 percent of the total United States population. Although this group includes speakers of a wide variety of languages, the largest group of NELB persons are speakers of Spanish. Nearly 16 million of the total population of language-minority households in 1980 were individuals living in households where Spanish was spoken.

A 1981 study prepared for the U.S. Department of Education to project the increase in the numbers of non-English-language-background and limited-English-proficient persons to the year 2000 predicted that the number of Americans with other than English-language backgrounds will continue to grow (U.S. Department of Education, 1981). Since this study based its projections on the generally more youthful age of the language-minority population and on legal immigration and could not account for such phenomena as illegal immigration or sudden influxes of refugees, it is likely that its estimates are conservative.

The study reported that the number of NELB persons in the United States will increase nearly twice as much as the general population between 1980 and the year 2000. While the general population was forecast to grow by about 17 percent over that time, the language-minority population was projected to increase by about 32 percent. Additionally, the study projected that most of the increase in the language-minority population would be caused by growth among people with Spanish-language backgrounds. The number of such persons was projected to increase by 55 percent by the year 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 1981).

Due to the youthfulness of the language-minority population (Hispanics, for example, in 1985 had a median age of 25.0 years as compared to a national median of 31.5 years), children are a larger proportion of this population group than of the general population. The number of school-aged children of non-English-language backgrounds is therefore expected to increase more by the year 2000 (40 percent projected increase) than the number of children in the general population (16 percent projected increase). The number of children from Spanish-language backgrounds is projected to grow at an even higher rate of 55 percent. It is particularly interesting to note that in 1981, national data indicated that two-thirds of all language-minority people in the United States were native-born, and three-quarters of children ages five through fourteen with limited English proficiency were born in the United States.

LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT CHILDREN

Clearly, not all persons of non-English-language backgrounds are limited in their English skills. Some have replaced the language of their childhood with English as their dominant tongue. Others are fully bilingual. However, some students and their parents have not yet acquired full proficiency in the English language. This may be due to a variety of factors, including age (older persons or children who have not yet entered school); recentness of immigration; residence in highly segregated neighborhoods; previous lack of appropriate English-language programs in school; and limited schooling due to migrancy, segregation, or exclusion. It is also important to note that NELB persons residing in Puerto Rico live in an environment where, although English is taught and bilingualism is encouraged, Spanish, not English, is the common language.

The 1981 projections study estimated that in 1980 there were 3.5 million language-minority children of school age in the United States who were limited in their English proficiency and in need of special assistance in school. However, estimates of the number of LEP children vary widely, depending on the definition of English proficiency that is employed. Estimates range from a low of 1.2 to 1.7 million to a high of 3.5 to 5.3 million LEP children.

Studies conducted for Congress pursuant to the federal Bilingual Education Act have generally used the definition of an LEP individual that is contained in that statute, i.e., persons with a non-English-language background whose ability to understand, speak, read, and write English is limited enough to deny them the ability to learn successfully in classrooms where the only language of instruction is English. Studies based on this definition of need—that, because of language barriers, children would not be able to participate effectively in school without special assistance—have produced estimates of need ranging from 3.5 to 5.3 million school-aged children.

The U.S. Department of Education produced the lower estimates in 1986 by altering the definition of LEP children contained in the federal statute to include the requirement that such children make "significant use" of the non-English language and by lowering the passing score on a test used to measure limited English proficiency in its studies (Waggoner, 1986). By deciding that LEP children who performed at the twentieth percentile on an English test (approximately the same result a student can get by merely guessing at the answers) no longer needed special language assistance, the department was able to shave 1.2 million children from its estimates of need. By including the undefined and unmeasurable requirement that a child make "significant use" of his or her native language, the department declared itself not responsible for another 800,000 children.

Also contained in the Department of Education's 1986 report was the assertion that 94 percent of language-minority children needing special services were receiving those services. These numbers were used primarily to justify reductions made in federal funding for bilingual education since 1980 and the apparently frozen levels of current support for Title VII. According to the Department of Education budget requests, no additional funding is needed for Title VII because there are really far fewer children in need of special services than had initially been claimed, and furthermore, almost all of them are already in special programs. In other words, there is virtually no unmet need.

Playing with definitions may be useful for justifying reductions in federal funding to serve a particular population, but such efforts do not reduce the actual number of real children needing special language assistance in schools. Data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census projections studies, figures from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and the testimony of local school officials appearing before congressional committees reauthorizing the Bilingual Education Act and Immigrant Education Act indicate that the population of LEP children is increasing and that there is still a tremendous unmet need for comprehensive special language programs in the schools (O'Malley, 1980). Researchers who hold that there are somewhere between 3.5 and 5.3 million LEP school-age children state that about two-thirds of LEP children are not being provided with the language assistance they need to succeed in school.

UNIDENTIFIED AND UNMET NEEDS

Problems of definition and assessment also abound at the local level. Regardless of the type of instructional program a district wishes to employ, all districts have the affirmative responsibility to identify non-English-language-background children and assess their proficiency in English. The specific definition of limited English proficiency is up to local districts, unless specified by state law, and there is wide variability in the testing instruments used and the cut-off scores that districts select.

Unfortunately, a substantial proportion of districts may be excluding needy children from language programs, based on incomplete assessments of English language skills. A 1983 U.S. Department of Education survey revealed that more than one-fourth of local districts elect to test only children's oral skills and only 61 percent assess language proficiency by testing all language skills (O'Malley, 1980). However, this limited form of assessment does not really measure the language skills that children need to succeed in school because

> . . . ability to speak and understand English is only part of what it takes to succeed in school programs designed for English-speaking majority children. Language-minority children must also acquire the reading and writing skills which become increasingly important in the upper grades, where achievement depends to a great extent on ability to read and comprehend written materials. (Waggoner, 1984)

Basic communication skills do not suffice if the task at hand is learning chemistry, reading American literature, or writing research papers.

Whether or not an LEP child is included in the federal government's estimates, every LEP child is entitled by federal law to an education appropriate to meet his or her language needs and to access to the school curriculum offered to other children. Designing local assessment measures that do not assess all the skills children need to succeed in school does not reduce the challenges faced by LEP children or by the instructors who must teach them. A district may decrease its count of LEP children by such measures, but it will surely increase its grade retention and dropout rates. Statistical subterfuge does not make the children or their needs disappear. It merely robs districts and teachers of the information and resources they need to fulfill their responsibility to help all children succeed. Failure to identify and assess children's language needs adequately also puts a local school district in a very vulnerable position if and when parents decide that the school district is not acting in good faith to meet their children's needs and decide to sue the district in court.

Without question, there are significant numbers of limited-English-proficient children in our schools. The youthfulness of the language-minority population and continuing immigration (legal and illegal) ensure that those numbers will continue to grow in the years ahead.

III. EXTRA CHALLENGES PROVIDED BY LEP CHILDREN

MINORITY GROUP AND LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Before any discussion of what "extra" challenges based on language and/or cultural barriers are presented by LEP children, it is appropriate to consider challenges that face these children by virtue of their position as minority-group members in the United States. The low socioeconomic status of most LEP children means these children face many of the same challenges as other poor children. In a recent article on LEP students in CONCERNS, the newsletter of the Council of Chief State School Officers Resource Center on Educational Equity, the authors acknowledged the "double whammy" facing most LEP children and called readers' attention to two equally vulnerable groups of children:

- those students for whom language is not the only education-related issue to be addressed by the schools; and
- those students for whom a limited knowledge of English raises an immediate barrier to their opportunity to learn.

Most LEP students do indeed face other educational problems in addition to those caused directly by lack of proficiency in English. Educators designing programs to serve this population would do well to consider these needs carefully and to plan for careful coordination with other school programs targeted on educationally and economically disadvantaged children.

As previously noted, LEP children may be recent immigrants or native-born United States citizens whose families have been in this country for generations. They have in common the fact that they generally belong to identifiable ethnic and racial groups. The non-Anglo national origin of most LEP students also identifies them as minority-group members. University of California at Berkeley anthropologist John Ogbu divides these individuals into three separate groups and posits different educational challenges and outcomes for each:

- *Autonomous minorities*—individuals who are minorities primarily in a numerical sense but are not economically or politically dominated;
- *Immigrant minorities*—people who have more or less voluntarily immigrated to the United States; and
- *Subordinate or castelike minorities*—people who were originally involuntarily and permanently incorporated into the United States society and then denied true assimilation (Ogbu, 1985).

In Ogbu's analysis, some LEP children, by virtue of their national origin, face neither the designation nor the difficulties of minority-group status. Others, primarily new arrivals, are designated as minority-group members, but perceive America as an opportunity society with education as the key. However, subordinate or castelike minorities have had long experience in the United States with minority status and discrimination. They have typically experienced discrimination in housing, employment, and education and may perceive that education has not provided the key to a better life nor full participation in American society.

Numerically, most LEP children in the United States are Hispanic, Mexican-American, and Puerto Rican, with long-term minority-group status and life experiences that would likely classify them as subordinate minority-group members according to Ogbu's framework. While recent immigrant children from a variety of nations experience many of the negative effects of minority-group status, Obgu and other researchers and practitioners report that the experiences and educational outcomes for these children may be quite different.

In addition to minority-group status, many LEP children, both immigrant and native-born, belong to families with low socioeconomic status. Thus they also face many of the same challenges that confront other poor children. They often reside in substandard housing in overcrowded neighborhoods. Inadequate housing leads to high rates of urban mobility, and these children are more likely than native-English-speaking majority-group children to attend several different schools. The extremely high rate of mobility of the LEP population is one of the most difficult challenges facing many school districts. Not only is continuity of schooling for such children lacking, but a district's attempts to collect longitudinal data and evaluate the effectiveness of its programs are frustrated because a very high proportion of the children who participated in a bilingual or other special program in kindergarten may be gone from the district by grade six. Other LEP children may have enrolled in schools within the district but not participated in special-assistance programs for various portions of their elementary-school experience.

Other types of mobility among certain groups of LEP children also cause repeated school interruptions. For children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, who are among the poorest children, education is disrupted repeatedly as parents move to follow the crops. For many Puerto Rican families, limited economic opportunities on the island of Puerto Rico and the presence of family members in both Puerto Rico and the continental United States have created a cycle of circular migration. Thus a substantial number of Puerto Rican children can expect to receive a portion of their schooling in all-English environments and a portion in all-Spanish classrooms.

As a result of residence in low-income neighborhoods and inequitable within-district funding patterns, many LEP children attend schools that are overcrowded and have few flexible resources. Their schools often have difficulty in attracting highly trained teachers because they are located in predominantly minority neighborhoods and because few school districts offer extra pay for the extra work entailed in being a bilingual education or ESL teacher.

Like other poor children, LEP children may suffer from a variety of health problems, beginning with early malnutrition and complicated by inadequate access to health care. Health may be especially fragile for those immigrant children from Third World countries, where they were exposed to a variety of diseases not found in the United States and where childhood immunizations may well have been absent.

Unemployment and underemployment are problems for many families of LEP children. Since little reliable data is available for LEP persons, data for Hispanics—by far the largest group of LEP persons, composing 65 to 75 percent of the population—is offered here as a surrogate indicator. While the labor force participation rate (that is, the proportion of the population that is either working or actively seeking work) is higher for Hispanic men (80.4 percent) than for white or black men (77.0 percent and 70.8 percent respectively), and the proportion of Hispanic men who are actually employed is only slightly less than the proportion of white men, Hispanic families earn substantially less than white families—and the gap is not narrowing (Orum, 1986).

This gap in earnings exists in part because of the low proportion of Hispanic women and youth who are working or seeking work, but also because earnings for employed Hispanics average about 30 percent less than for whites. The Hispanic unemployment rate—while lower than the rate for blacks—is typically 60 percent above the white rate in both good and bad economic times. There are considerable differences among Hispanic subgroups, with Puerto Rican men, women, and youth typically faring the worst of the three major Hispanic subgroups (Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans) (Orum, 1986).

These high rates of unemployment, depressed wages, and occupational segregation into low-paying and generally unstable jobs have resulted in high proportions of Hispanic children being born and raised in poverty. According to a 1986 overview of the demographic status of Hispanics:

> The proportion of Hispanic children living in poverty in 1984 was more than double that of non-Hispanic families. Some 25 percent of Hispanic families had incomes below the poverty level as compared to 11 percent of non-Hispanic families; poverty rates were highest for Puerto Ricans. The incidence of poverty among Hispanic children in 1984 was 84 percent above that for all U.S. children. (Orum, 1986)

The 1984 data also indicated that poverty for Hispanic children increased not only for children residing in households headed by females but also in households headed by males and homes where both parents were present. However, Hispanic children in households headed by females appear to be particularly vulnerable economically; two-thirds of these children were poor in 1984—the same rate as for similarly situated black children.

In conclusion, LEP children who are members of identifiable minority groups (especially those who are members of subordinate groups or groups with a long history of experiencing discrimination) and LEP children who are of low socioeconomic status face a variety of pressures, which create educational challenges in addition to the barriers posed by language. Educational programs that simply address language and assume that in all other respects these children are identical to middle-class majority-group children are likely to fail.

CHALLENGES POSED BY LANGUAGE BARRIERS AND NON-UNITED-STATES NATIONAL ORIGIN

Limited-English-proficient children have a formidable task facing them as they enter school. If they are to succeed in school, they must overcome the obstacles caused by poverty and assignment to low-achieving schools, learn to deal successfully with an institution and individuals from a culture other than their own, master all the subjects taught in the regular school curriculum, and become completely proficient in a second language—English.

Immigrant LEP children from differing countries of origin also bring with them different experiences and traumas, which must be addressed before effective learning can take place. For example, children who lived in countries experiencing civil war or other armed conflict are likely to have suffered the physical and psychological injuries and deprivations of war. Mental-health practitioners have begun to call attention to the fact that some children—especially those from Southeast Asia and Central America—have seen their family members tortured and killed, and some have themselves experienced torture and abuse. Other young adolescents have been pressed into military service and may have participated directly in violence and bloodshed. Some of these youngsters have been diagnosed as suffering from the same type of post-traumatic stress syndrome experienced by Vietnam veterans. Unfortunately, few schools have comprehensive mental-health programs, and even where school psychologists are available, there are few who speak such children's native languages.

Regardless of the particular problems that accompany children from their country of origin or their status as members of language minorities in the United States, LEP children are expected to acquire English-language skills as quickly as possible since state and local policies rarely allow children to stay in the special language-assistance programs for the length of time necessary to develop full language proficiency. While educators have no expectation that a high-school student studying German, French, or Spanish for one hour per day over three years will become a fluent, competitive user of that language, they often do hold that assumption for LEP children receiving as little as twenty minutes per day of special instruction in English or assistance from a bilingual aide or tutor.

Barriers caused by language should not be underestimated, especially among LEP children who are clearly victims of poverty. Beyond the tragic legacy of poverty, LEP-children face educational barriers and lowered achievement which cannot be explained solely by poverty. Although the U.S. Department of

Education has suggested in recent years that most of the problems of language-minority children are attributable to poverty and not to language barriers, research has shown that both factors have a substantial and independent effect on academic achievement. A 1984 study conducted by the National Center for Bilingual Research found that even when controlling for the effects of socioeconomic status and ethnicity, 50 percent of the gap in reading achievement between language-minority and non-language-minority children was the product of language background (So and Chan, 1984). Based on this information, the authors concluded that language-minority students need programs that are designed to eliminate language barriers and not just to deal with socioeconomic factors. Those special language programs should be designed to help children achieve full proficiency in English, not just oral skills. As previously discussed, too many special programs concentrate only on oral-language-production skills. Reading and writing skills are much more complex and take longer to learn, as does the type of academic English students need in order to participate fully in schooling. An excellent discussion of this fact is provided in Dr. Kenji Hakuta's recent book, *Mirror of Language* (Hakuta, 1986).

Ease of language acquisition also varies according to the background of LEP students and their families. Children who already have strong oral and literacy skills in their first language have a tremendous advantage over children whose native-language skills are poorly developed. Likewise, children whose parents are literate in their native language generally have an easier time mastering English. Native-language literacy and educational level of parents may vary considerably between LEP national-origin groups. It is unrealistic to expect a child who has poorly developed oral skills and no written skills in his or her native language and whose parents are marginally literate to acquire English at the same rate as a child who is already literate in his or her native language and has educated, literate parents. Many of the achievement differences between language-minority groups that are commonly explained by different "cultural" values placed on education may more properly be explained by the difference in native-language-literacy skills and family educational background.

This is not to say that cultural attitudes do not play a role in schooling, for they do. However, to attribute all differences in achievement to cultural factors is to cast much too broad a net. Certainly, different groups of individuals place differing emphasis on the importance of formal education as a means to economic success and on the desirability of replacing the home language with English. Ogbu's work suggests that recent immigrants may have a different belief system about education from that which predominates in native-born linguistic minorities. Dr. Lilly Wong-Fillmore's research on bilingual programs in northern California also indicates that different cultural groups have different learning styles (Wong-Fillmore, 1985).

However, almost all LEP parents believe that it is extremely important that their children learn English—and learn it well. A recent survey conducted in Miami on attitudes toward English found that the Cuban community placed a higher value on having their children learn English than did black and white Miami residents (Trasvina and Combs, 1986). The importance given to learning English is not the only significant variable. Differences may be found in terms of the importance of also retaining a native language. This is true not only because of a community's value structure but also because for some groups of language minorities bilingualism is a practical or economic necessity. In the case of Puerto Ricans who expect to move back and forth between Puerto Rico and the continental United States, proficiency in both Spanish and English is a necessity. Similarly, Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants living in many parts of the Southwest essentially live in an interdependent border economy, and there are many economic and social incentives to retain the Spanish language. On the other hand, individuals who have migrated to the United States from a distant or war-torn land to which they never expect to return have less incentive to maintain the non-English language.

The different experiences of various language-minority groups and the practical situations in which they live contribute to differing opinions about the value of bilingualism and may translate to differing preferences for bilingual or all-English instructional approaches. Whatever instructional approach a local district selects for LEP children should take into account the needs and preferences of the local community. Parent and community support is important to the success of any program for LEP or other children. Therefore, if parents believe that children have a strong reason to retain their native-language skills in addition to acquiring English, an all-English instructional program may not meet their needs and may be resisted. Conversely, if the particular language minority group strongly feels that the child's native language should be replaced with English, a district may have difficulty finding support for a bilingual-education approach.

However, having indicated the importance of parental support and input into the program selection process, several cautions must be noted. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the instructional goals and methods of a bilingual program are carefully and fully explained to parents so that parents understand that English is used extensively in bilingual programs and that the goal of the program is to help their children become fully proficient in English. As confusing as the term *bilingual education* has proven to be to monolingual speakers of English, it is equally likely to be misunderstood by LEP parents.

For example, if a well-informed LEP community presses a district for nonbilingual instruction for their children, local school officials should not assume their task is suddenly easier or cheaper. Districts wishing to provide nonbilingual instruction (in states and circumstances where this is allowed) must still assess students' language needs and provide LEP students with a comprehensive educational program staffed by appropriately trained teachers and supported by curriculum materials and texts designed for the needs of the LEP students. They are also responsible for finding a way to make content instruction accessible to the children while they learn English. In many respects, a high-caliber all-English instructional program for LEP children is more difficult and costly than a bilingual-education approach.

Whatever type of program is designed to meet the language-learning needs of LEP students, educators should keep in mind that the total educational development of the child is just as important as the teaching of English. Programs that quickly move children to an all-English curriculum in the regular classroom but then create situations where former LEP students are overrepresented in special education and underrepresented in gifted and talented programs are doing a disservice to their students. When language-minority children are no longer limited in English proficiency, they should be distributed across the achievement scale in about the same pattern as other similarly situated children. The lack of English skills does not signify an underdeveloped intellect. In fact, Hakuta's research suggests that language-minority children may actually have more cognitive flexibility than other children by virtue of their bilingualism. There is no excuse for simply providing these children with remedial curricula or for regarding them as "successful" and no longer in need of special assistance when they score at the lowest levels attained by native speakers of English (Hakuta, 1986).

IV. PAST ATTEMPTS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LEP CHILDREN

Throughout United States history there have been several different approaches to providing schooling for LEP children. Children of black slaves, whose parents spoke a variety of African languages, were denied access to any formal education. Until the Civil War many Southern states had strict laws against teaching blacks how to read or write. In the nineteenth century, where other non-English-language groups were sufficiently numerous within a school system, bilingual or non-English-language instruction was sometimes provided. Territorial laws in New Mexico in the late 1800s allowed for instruction in English, Spanish, or both, as decided by local school boards. In the Midwest, German-language and German-English-bilingual schools were fairly widespread (Leibowitz, 1978). Diego Castellanos, whose book *The Best of Two Worlds* provides a detailed history of the schooling of language-minority children in the United States, notes that approximately 1 million American children received their education in German and English during the 1800s. In Hartford, Connecticut, according to the *Annual Report of the Board of School Visitors for the Year Ending August 31, 1869,* a significant program was continued with the approval of the Board of Education. It reads:

> On application of the Committee of the German School, situated in the Center District, earnestly seconded by the German population generally, this school was transferred to the care and control of the Board of Visitors, became indeed a public school, was accepted, and placed at

> the Brown School, under the immediate charge of an instructor capable of teaching both the German and English tongues. The department is designed to teach German children the English language, by converting its study with the ordinary school course, without permitting them to forget, but on the contrary to improve their knowledge of their mother tongue. By this means, it is expected that they will become proficient in both languages, while pursuing the ordinary studies of the school.

However, this early flowering of bilingual education lasted only half a century, and according to Castellanos, enjoyed little widespread popular support since the programs generally resulted from political pressure from language minority groups (predominantly German) and not from general public support.

Bilingualism began to disappear in American schools as the numbers of immigrants and newly acquired non-English-speaking territories increased. The fact that the immigrants and colonized peoples included more and more non-northern European peoples also contributed to a rise in ethnic chauvinism which sanctioned the subordination of "inferior races." Indian-removal policies intensified with the adoption of the Homestead Act and also included attempts to eradicate Indian languages and separate Indian children from their families. In the Southwest, continued migration of Anglo-Americans caused the abrogation of language rights guaranteed to the Indians by treaty, as well as the revision of many state laws sanctioning the use of Spanish for schooling.

The anti-German sentiment surrounding World War I resulted in a barrage of English-only measures and prohibitions against the use of non-English languages in schooling except for the express purpose of teaching a foreign language. Nebraska even attempted to restrict the teaching of a foreign language (German) by a church school to children below grade eight. The Nebraska law was challenged and overturned by the Supreme Court in 1923 (*Meyer v. Nebraska*). However, the practice of English-only schooling and often the segregation of language-minority children into separate classes in schools was firmly established by statute and practice during this period and continued unchanged throughout the first half of the current century. LEP children were essentially left to sink or swim in an instructional environment designed for native speakers of English. Their general failure to achieve under such circumstances was often taken as evidence of their inferiority and lack of aptitude for education (Leibowitz, 1978).

The segregation of schoolchildren by race was finally successfully overturned in 1954 by the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Earlier challenges had been raised on behalf of segregated Hispanic school children, but none had successfully reached the Supreme Court (see *Mendez v. Westminister School District*, 64 F. Supp. 544 [S. D. Cal. 1946] aff'd. 161 F. 2d 774 [9th Cir. 1947]). The *Brown* decision signaled a reexamination of American civil rights and educational policies and was followed by enactment of federal civil-rights laws designed to end unequal treatment based on race, creed, color, and national origin.

This new interpretation of educational civil rights was followed closely by another event that spurred innovation in schooling practices for LEP children—the 1959 Cuban revolution and the subsequent immigration of many Cubans fleeing communism. The arrival of these Cubans in Miami (and other cities) caused school districts to try to find new ways to teach Cuban children English and provide for their education. Educators borrowed heavily from the foreign-language field and created a grammar translation method, a structural audio-lingual approach, and a descriptive audiolingual approach (Castellanos, 1983). All three methods came to be known as English as a Second Language, or ESL.

ESL instruction by itself proved to have severe limitations in teaching Cuban children, in large part because it was difficult to serve large numbers of LEP children through a program that required children to be "pulled out" of regular classrooms for part of the day. This had also been the experience in New York a decade earlier when large numbers of Puerto Ricans came to New York City after World War II. At first, when the numbers of Puerto Rican children were small, pullout programs were used. However, as the number of children needing special language assistance grew, pullout programs were ineffective and a new approach was required.

Additionally, because ESL was usually a pullout form of instruction for a small portion of the school day, the rest of the time LEP students were typically assigned to a regular school classroom and left to "sink or swim" when it came to mastery of other curricula. The ESL approach by itself did little to make content curricula accessible to LEP children. Furthermore, since it was primarily adopted from strategies oriented toward literate adult learners, the approach was not totally suitable for young children with no previous literacy skills in their native language. In fact, later federal guidelines proscribed the use of ESL by itself with elementary-school LEP children because of these limitations.

Florida educators needed a more comprehensive and developmentally appropriate approach to teaching Cuban children and decided to experiment with a self-contained classroom approach using both English and Spanish. Thus the first bilingual education program since World War II was established for Cuban children at the Coral Way School in Coral Gables, Florida.

In response to the demands of the Cuban community in Florida, and as a result of federal incentives and funding, more of these bilingual programs began to appear in the 1960s. While rejecting the use of ESL as an isolated instructional approach, educators incorporated ESL instructional techniques into these bilingual education programs, and modified forms of ESL instruction came to be included as essential components.

Much of the basis for the modern use of bilingual education came as a result of federal law, administrative regulations and guidelines, and judicial decree. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 specified that the ability to benefit from or participate in programs receiving federal assistance could not be denied on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The Civil Rights Act also gave all agencies distributing federal funds the affirmative obligation to ensure that the recipients of such funds did not violate civil rights laws.

In the case of education, this responsibility initially fell to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). In 1970, in response to many complaints about unfair and inequitable educational practices with respect to language-minority children, OCR sent a memorandum to all school districts with 5 percent or more national-origin-minority (NOM) enrollments. The memorandum advised local school districts that OCR reviews had uncovered several common practices that served to deny NOM children an equal educational opportunity. The memorandum advised school districts that they had four responsibilities:

1. Where inability to speak and understand English excludes NOM children from effective participation in the educational program of the school, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its programs to these students.
2. School districts must not use criteria that measure or evaluate English-language skills as the basis for assigning NOM children to classes for the mentally retarded, nor may these children be denied access to college-preparatory courses on a basis directly relating to the school's failure to teach English.
3. Ability-grouping or -tracking systems must deal with the special language needs of NOM children, must meet those needs as quickly as possible, and must not operate as permanent tracks.
4. School districts must notify NOM parents of school activities, and such notice may have to be provided in a language other than English. (Pottinger, 1970)

Lack of compliance with the memorandum led to a variety of court suits. A case brought by Chinese parents in San Francisco whose children were provided with no special language instruction eventually was heard by the Supreme Court in 1974. The Court ruled in *Lau v. Nichols* that merely providing LEP students with the same teachers, texts, and curricula provided to fluent English speakers did not constitute equal educational opportunity and ordered the district to provide special instruction to make its curriculum accessible. Writing for the majority, Justice William O. Douglas maintained:

> Basic English skills are at the very core of what these public schools teach. Imposition of a requirement that before a child can effectively participate in the educational program, he must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education. We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful.

In the *Lau* case, the Court was not asked to prescribe a specific educational remedy, and thus none was ordered, although the Court's description of the district's responsibilities created a presumption in favor of bilingual education. Another case, *Aspira v. New York City Board of Education*, brought on behalf of Puerto Rican students in New York City and still pending in the courts after the *Lau* decision, was settled by a consent decree which stipulated the provision of bilingual services to LEP children in New York City.

In an attempt to interpret the *Lau* decision for all school districts and clarify their responsibilities to LEP children, OCR issued a set of guidelines to be used by school districts in designing programs and by OCR in monitoring compliance with the Civil Rights Act. These guidelines, known as the *Lau Remedies*, outlined appropriate educational approaches for LEP children and required school districts found to be out of compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and with twenty or more LEP students of the same language group per grade to file a compliance plan with OCR. Districts with less than twenty LEP students per grade were still required to file a plan describing their affirmative steps, but their approach was not required to be as comprehensive as that of districts with larger numbers of LEP students. Differing programmatic responsibilities were based both on the practical difficulty of providing bilingual instructional programs to small or very diverse populations of students and on a supporting Supreme Court opinion in *Lau* that maintained that "numbers were at the heart of the issue."

For LEP students in elementary school, the *Remedies* prescribed transitional bilingual education, a bilingual/bicultural program, or a bilingual/multicultural program. While an ESL program was deemed an appropriate instructional approach at the secondary-school level, English-only approaches were deemed not suitable for LEP elementary-school students in concentrations of greater than twenty per grade level.

The next federal directive on appropriate educational programs for LEP children came in 1980 when a federal district judge held in *Northwest Arctic v. Califano* that the new U.S. Department of Education could not accord the *Lau Remedies* the weight of law since they had never been officially promulgated as regulations. The court directed the department to promulgate official regulations and, in one of the newly created department's first actions, a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) was issued in 1980. Although the NPRM, commonly known as the Lau Regulations, accorded local districts more flexibility than did the *Remedies*, the proposed regulations were bitterly opposed by many state and local educational agencies. Opponents of bilingual education and advocates for less federal involvement in education civil rights opposed the regulations vociferously. Congressional action in the fall of 1980 delayed the implementation of the proposed regulations until the following June. However, after the change of administrations, the Reagan Department of Education withdrew the much-maligned regulations. Although former Secretary of Education Terrel Bell promised at the time that new regulations would be forthcoming, none to date have been issued, leaving local school districts with no official administrative guidance as to appropriate measures for compliance with federal civil rights law with respect to LEP children.

Although the federal government has done little in the last seven years to define or monitor local compliance with equal educational opportunity provisions, the courts have continued to define the responsibilities of school districts. According to one review of the literature:

> A significant number of suits have been brought against school districts for failing to design programs to remove educational barriers for language minority children. Most decisions have shown a consistent adherence to a broad definition of equal educational opportunity which includes access to the school's entire curriculum. Courts have ruled that language assistance programs used by school districts must be educationally sound, supported by educational theory, and promoted by a recognized education expert. Courts have rejected programs which focus solely on the acquisition of English language skills without providing meaningful access to other content areas, and have rejected programs which provide language assistance to language minority children for only 30 minutes per day. Courts have also ruled that failure to provide adequate resources to sound programs also constitutes denial of equal educational opportunity. Finally, judicial decisions have also required school districts to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of special programs, and abandon plans which have been shown to be unsuccessful. (Orum and Yzaguirre, 1986)

During the late 1960s and the 1970s, a number of states also established state laws that mandated language assessment and the operation of special language programs. Some states enacted statutes that mandated the use of bilingual programs under certain situations, the main criterion being the number of LEP students from a single language present in a school at a particular grade level. A 1984–1985 survey of state education agencies conducted by the National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education reported that twelve states and Guam had statutes which mandated bilingual education; twelve states, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands had statutes permitting bilingual programs (NCBE, 1986). Twenty-five states had no statute, and only West Virginia had a state law that prohibited bilingual instruction (see chart: State Laws Regarding Bilingual Education 1984-1985).

The federal government also established a modest discretionary funding program in 1968 (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) to provide financial support for some bilingual education programs and to train teachers, conduct research and evaluations, collect data, and help develop bilingual curricular materials. Today, funding for that Act tops $140 million and also provides support for the development of alternative nonbilingual approaches.

The debate in recent years over instructional approach has been wide-ranging, intensely emotional, and often based more on politics than pedagogy. As previously mentioned, opposition to the notion of using any non-English language in public life has led some to mount attacks on bilingual education. Opponents have pointed to mixed evaluation results in bilingual programs and attacked the quality of the research that has been conducted. They have also insisted that unless evaluations can prove conclusively that bilingual education is the best and only way to teach English to LEP children, these programs should not be favored by federal or state requirements or funding patterns.

The vociferous political debate and attempts to "throw the baby out with the bathwater" have obscured several practical realities that indicate not that bilingual education is ineffective or un-American, but that the field—like any other—needs continuing growth and improvement. It is also clear that bilingual education, while currently the most comprehensive educational approach for LEP children, is not practical for all LEP children all the time.

State Laws Regarding Bilingual Education
1984–1985

	Legislation			
State or Territory	***Mandates***	***Permits***	***Prohibits***	***No Statute***
Alabama				x
Alaska	x			
Arizona	x			
Arkansas				x
California	x			
Colorado		x		
Connecticut				x
Delaware				x
District of Columbia				x
Florida				x
Georgia				x
Hawaii				x
Idaho				x
Illinois	x			
Indiana		x		
Iowa	x			
Kansas		x		
Kentucky				x
Louisiana				x
Maine		x		
Maryland			x	

State Laws Regarding Bilingual Education 1984–1985
(continued)

State or Territory	*Legislation*			
	Mandates	*Permits*	*Prohibits*	*No Statute*
Massachusetts	x			
Michigan	x			
Minnesota		x		
Mississippi				x
Missouri				x
Montana				x
Nebraska				x
Nevada				x
New Hampshire		x		
New Jersey	x			
New Mexico		x		
New York		x		
North Carolina				x
North Dakota				x
Ohio				x
Oklahoma				x
Oregon		x		
Pennsylvania				x
Rhode Island		x		
South Carolina				x
South Dakota		x		
Tennessee				x
Texas	x			
Utah		x		
Vermont				x
Virginia				x
Washington	x			
West Virginia			x	
Wisconsin	x			
Wyoming				x
American Samoa		x		
Guam	x			
Northern Marianas				x
Puerto Rico				x
Trust Terr. of Pacific				x
Virgin Islands		x		

Source: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education *Forum*, March 1986.

We need to discover other effective approaches for situations where bilingual education is not practical due to shortage of teachers, small numbers of LEP children, LEP children from a wide variety of language backgrounds with speakers of no one language numerous enough to form a bilingual class, and LEP children from language backgrounds for which teachers and curricular materials are almost nonexistent in the United States.

In the last few years, researchers have begun to look again at methods used to teach foreign languages to fluent English-speakers to determine whether or not these methods can be adopted for use with LEP children. There has been great interest in the immersion model developed in Canada to teach French to native-English-speakers, and attempts have been made to adopt this model for use with LEP children in the United States. However, a recent U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report on bilingual education (GAO, 1987) cautions that immersion is simply a general term for teaching approaches which do not use a child's native language and that some districts may be operating "submersion" or "sink-or-swim" approaches in the name of immersion even though such approaches have been ruled unacceptable by the courts.

GAO identifies "structured immersion" as the legal variation of immersion programs and defines that approach as

> . . . teaching in English but with several differences from submersion: the teacher understands the native language and students may speak it to the teacher, although the teacher generally answers only in English. Knowledge of English is not assumed, and the curriculum is modified in vocabulary and pacing, so that the content will be understood. Some programs include some language arts teaching in the native language.

The modified vocabulary and sentence structure used in teaching school subjects in immersion programs in which students lack enough language skills to understand the regular curriculum is known as "sheltered English" instruction.

However, researchers have cautioned that the immersion model was developed to teach a minority language to majority-group members and is not automatically transferable in the reverse for use with LEP children in the United States. Initial results for a longitudinal study of United States immersion programs for LEP children conducted by the U.S. Department of Education indicate that children in these programs are not performing as well on any measure as are children in bilingual education programs.

Some innovative all-English programs show promise of being able to provide a more comprehensive type of education than ESL does to LEP children who cannot receive bilingual education. However, it should be noted that research and evaluation related to these programs are in their infancy and that there are very few teachers trained in these methods. Especially in the absence of clear federal guidance, local school districts should pay careful attention to recent court decisions which have indicated a preference for bilingual education and for instructional approaches that do more than simply teach English language arts. Naturally, good educational practice requires that any instructional approach be carefully and continuously evaluated, since districts have the responsibility to modify or abandon programs that are not proving effective.

While some local educators have complained of the federal government's attempts in recent years to establish minimum thresholds in the education of LEP children, it is important to view this intervention in the context of past historical neglect by states and local districts. Historically, the most consistent response of educators to the challenges presented by LEP children has been to do nothing special for LEP children, but simply to place them in all-English educational programs designed for native-English-speaking children. This approach—or non-approach, if you will—is often referred to as "sink or swim." While this approach worked for some children, it produced low achievement rates and high incidence of school abandonment for the majority of LEP children. This sink-or-swim approach was specifically outlawed by the Supreme Court in its 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* decision.

While there have been examples of bilingual approaches to schooling since early colonial times, "sink or swim" schooling, complete segregation of language-minority children into different schools or classrooms, and exclusion of children from school for speaking the native language on school grounds were widespread practices. Consequently, dropout rates among immigrant and native-born LEP children were very high. However, in earlier times, this was not regarded as a problem since high-school completion and college attendance were viewed as necessary for only a small portion of public-school students. There were plentiful job options in unskilled and marginally skilled fields for high-school dropouts, who were able to become productively employed persons in most cases. However, the labor market has changed considerably since the expanding days of the industrial revolution and the resulting manufacturing boom. Even the military, which had long been an option for high-school dropouts, has become much more selective, and several of the armed services require a high-school diploma and more. The changing demographic and immigration patterns in the United States mean there will continue to be significant numbers of LEP children among us. These children not only have a right to a full educational opportunity, but we as a society can no longer afford to adopt educational practices that do not provide them with the skills they need to become literate, employable members of our society.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

NECESSARY COMPONENTS OF ANY PROGRAM FOR LEP STUDENTS

Research and court rulings indicate that any instructional program designed for LEP children should include the following features:

1. *Clearly articulated goals.* Goals should be clearly articulated and understood by everyone participating in the program, directly or indirectly. This includes school-board members, the district superintendent and central office administrators, principals and other school-site administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, school support staff, parents, and students. Understanding of and agreement on goals are essential if instruction is to be properly delivered, supported, and evaluated and if educators are to work together as a team with parents and students.
2. *Identification and assessment of students.* All students should have their language proficiency assessed so that they can be placed in an appropriate educational program. Districts should take care to identify problems that may be disguised or hidden and to ensure that the full range of language skills (not just oral-production ability) is assessed.
3. *Appropriately designed program.* The program design depends on the students and their unique needs, and—to some extent—on the resources available to the district. Whatever instructional approach is selected should take into consideration the specific language needs of those to be served and must be based on expert research. The program should provide the fullest access possible to the school curriculum while the children are learning English and should concentrate on providing quality instruction rather than a superficial, fast-track approach. Care should be taken to provide LEP children with access to special programs where needed and to supportive services such as those provided by counselors, school psychologists, and social workers.
4. *Qualified and well-trained staff.* Qualified staff should be recruited and assigned to the program. The district should provide a well-designed and continuing program of inservice training for instructional personnel participating in the program. This may or may not include assistance in developing non-English language skills, depending upon the type of program chosen. Teachers with emergency credentials or temporary waivers who do not meet regularly established qualifications should be used sparingly and only when good-faith efforts to recruit fully qualified teachers have been unsuccessful. Teachers without full credentials or adequate preparation must be supported by a strong inservice education program designed to help them gain the necessary skills as quickly as possible. Staffing patterns may vary according to program design and local preference, but low pupil-teacher ratios are strongly recommended via reduced class size, instructional aides, or team teaching.
5. *Availability of appropriate instructional materials.* Textbooks and other curricular materials appropriate to the program must be available to teachers and students. If a bilingual approach is being used, instructional materials, readers, and library books in the students' native language should be made available. Instructional materials in English should be specially

designed for second-language learners, not simply low-skill-level materials designed for native-English-speakers.

6. *A strong evaluation and research component.* All programs should be evaluated as to how well they implement their model. While this sounds obvious, many programs in practice bear little resemblance to their design. This has been the case for many "bilingual" programs, which in theory were to provide a certain percentage of instructional time in the primary language and use bilingual instructors. In practice, some "bilingual" programs turned out to be using minimal amounts of the primary language and employing monolingual English-speaking teachers. If the program is evaluated by the model and not the practice, it appears that bilingual education has failed when, in fact, the actual shortcoming was failure to implement the model. Not all program evaluations can use a formal research design, with random assignment to treatment and control groups. Few districts have the resources for those types of evaluations, and there are prohibitions against denying LEP children needed instructional services simply for evaluation purposes. All programs should collect data on participating students, both during and after their participation in the project. All should document their programs and demonstrate that whatever model has been selected is being implemented according to program design and provided with adequate resources to carry out its goals.
7. *Parental and community involvement.* Provisions for input from parents and for attempts to gain community support are essential in any type of program. School notices and information about the program should be made available to parents in a language and form that they can understand, regardless of whether or not the program implemented is a bilingual model. LEP parents often have limited English-language skills themselves and may be best able to help support their children's education if the district can provide parent education or English classes for adults—or coordinate the delivery of these services through community colleges or community-based organizations.

THE CASE FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

While early research results were mixed, recent studies have begun to indicate more and more clearly that bilingual education programs, properly implemented, provide the most complete and effective educational experience for LEP children. In my reading of the research and my experience as a teacher, administrator, and school superintendent of a large urban district, I am convinced that for most LEP children bilingual education represents the best way to learn.

Let me also note that as an administrator I recognize that bilingual education is not always practical in all situations. We do have school districts that are faced with only three or four children in each of fifteen or twenty language groups. However, even in school districts with great language diversity, there is usually sufficient concentration of some language groups to make grouping possible for bilingual education. GAO recently estimated that only 22 to 26 percent of LEP students are in situations where bilingual education may be impractical (GAO, 1987). But saying that there are some instances where bilingual education may not be practical is not tantamount to saying that we do not have a responsibility to provide it wherever we can. The large number of Spanish-speaking LEP students in most districts certainly warrants something other than partial instruction on a pull-out basis. Most Spanish-speaking LEP students in most school districts can and should be served by bilingual education programs.

The growing number of Hispanics as a proportion of the school population and their current dismal educational situation warrants a comprehensive approach for Hispanic LEP students, not pull-out or fast-track superficial approaches which teach English and nothing more. Bilingual education should be viewed as a total educational program, not a narrow pedagogical technique.

When we consider bilingual education from a broader perspective, we can more readily understand its underlying rationale. In essence, the rationale has three components:

1. *Philosophical*—Bilingualism has an intrinsic positive value, as it enables the individual to function in two different language environments. Apart from the obvious advantages of being able to participate more freely in the worlds of trade, government, defense, and other international activities, it simply allows a far greater insight into a different culture. Being bilingual is a major factor in developing relatively quick and positive relationships with members of other language groups.
2. *Pedagogical*—Educators have long promoted the importance of good communication toward the development of a successful teaching and learning process. A good teacher's goal is to ensure that the learner is indeed understanding the information being presented as part of the lesson. Thus, teachers use as many means as possible to get their message across: oral, visual, tactile, kinesthetic. Certainly, the use of a language the student understands is a most basic strategy in providing an environment conducive to successful learning.
3. *Psychological*—Academic success is enhanced to a significant extent by the degree to which an individual is confident about his or her possibility of succeeding. This self-confidence is in turn nurtured by a positive self-image derived from many instances and examples of successful experiences. Thus the individual who can view his or her language as a positive asset and a useful tool in the learning process is more likely to be optimistic about success and therefore more willing to commit the time and energy necessary for success. The school has a responsibility, therefore, to help boys and girls develop this notion about themselves, their language, and their

> culture. Using the student's native language for instruction promotes the idea that knowledge of the language is valuable and that the student is indeed a valued participant in the educational process.

When one considers the rationale described above, it becomes apparent that a bilingual education program could be appropriate in a wide variety of settings and not merely for limited-English-proficient students in the United States. In fact, such an educational strategy might be helpful anywhere in the world where speakers of two languages interact frequently. When viewed in this context, bilingual education is clearly not remedial education nor compensatory education. It is, quite simply, good education.

APPROACHES FOR SMALL OR DIVERSE LEP POPULATIONS

The federal 1984 Bilingual Education Act recognizes that there are instances where bilingual education may not be practical and provides some support for alternative programs. Many state laws also allow for a variety of designs in programs for LEP children. With respect to federal civil rights enforcement, local education agencies have always had the option of demonstrating that they can provide another approach that is as effective as bilingual education or of making the case that after a good-faith effort, they were unable to locate sufficient numbers of bilingual teachers. Chapter 1, the federal compensatory education program, also provides funds that may be used to support educational interventions of any sort for LEP-disadvantaged children.

When a district has nine LEP students from six different language groups, educators have to be creative. No one ever said that designing effective instructional programs to meet all the diverse needs found in many school districts today is easy. In the case of diverse LEP student populations, the task can be quite difficult. Districts may have to really mine community resources and search for native-language teachers, tutors (peer and adult), aides, volunteers, or mentors to provide necessary language support for LEP children learning English and other subjects in an all-English program.

If a district cannot provide bilingual instruction, it must provide an alternative, specially designed program for LEP students. Placing these students in the "mainstream," i.e., the instructional program designed for native-English-speaking children, and providing them with no special instructional support is both illegal and unconscionable.

Instruction in content areas must be provided in such a way that children's limited skills in English do not prohibit them from understanding the lessons. In this "sheltered English" approach, every lesson—math, science, social studies, etc.—is in part a language lesson, since needed vocabulary and language skills must be taught along with the subject-area concepts. Well-developed programs using this instructional approach have a language development strand that runs throughout the entire curriculum. Teachers must be knowledgeable about and skilled in providing instruction for second-language acquisition and language development. Effective teaching through this method is much more difficult than approaches that use a child's native language, since twice as much must be taught and the teacher is often not able to reach the existing knowledge base of the student. It requires especially great effort and skillful teachers to teach complex thinking skills using this approach. While "sheltered English" is a relatively new and still-developing approach, it is highly preferable to "mainstreaming" LEP children or providing them only a few minutes a day of ESL instruction. It is a tool to be used when bilingual instruction is not feasible and also when a transition is needed for children who are exiting from bilingual programs and preparing to enter the mainstream.

Other instructional techniques are also indicated when a district cannot provide bilingual instruction. These strategies can be used to enhance instruction in bilingual programs, but they are critical in districts that are unable to provide children with native-language support. Programs that work with parents to encourage them to read to children at home can provide additional support, as can instructional approaches that rely less on "teacher talk" and allow more time for student oral-language practice and for peer interaction and correction. Small class sizes and the use of peer tutors can also be helpful.

Perhaps one of the most promising instructional approaches for all types of programs serving LEP children is cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy that allows and encourages learning to take place in teams and helps students benefit from peer interaction. Research has demonstrated gains for all students when cooperative learning has been employed; gains have been most dramatic for minority students, especially Hispanics. As Spencer Kagan, of the University of California at Riverside, explains:

> The reason for the poor record of schools in educating and holding nonwhite students has not been established. One plausible explanation is the structural bias hypothesis. In brief, the hypothesis states that traditional classroom structures, because they rely heavily on competitive task and reward structures, provide a bias in favor of the achievement and values of majority students, who are generally more competitive in their social orientation than are minority students. This hypothesis has received some support. Minority students, especially Hispanic students, are more cooperative in their social orientation than are majority students, and cooperative students achieve better and feel better about themselves and school in less competitive classrooms. (Kagan, 1985)

Compared to other instructional methods, cooperative learning provides more opportunity for students to generate language through both greater frequency and variety of practice and more time on task. It also relies on the division of learning tasks into masterable parts. Additionally, rewards for learning are more frequent than in most traditional classrooms and include both teacher and peer reinforcement. Many schools using this approach report that student behavior problems diminish greatly. Research and practice have proven cooperative learning to be worthy of inclusion in all programs but most especially in those serving language-minority children.

VI. ASSESSING THE PROGRESS

As in the case of all other educational services, schools are accountable to parents and the general public for the quality of instructional programs provided to LEP children. These programs must be held to at least the same standards of accountability as any other programs operated by state education agencies and local school districts. State and local educators must be diligent in planning regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure high-quality services and to continually improve and adjust programs as needed. In the case of programs that are experimental or make use of staff that are not appropriately certified or are not fully proficient in the languages of instruction (i.e., emergency credentials, waivers, etc.), even more stringent degrees of monitoring and evaluation may be called for.

Every special program designed for LEP students should have a strong assessment component that requires the collection of data about the characteristics of the students and teachers, the type and level of program services, policies and practices, and student outcomes. In designing these assessment and evaluation components, educators should consider the following points:

1. *Implementation Evaluations Are Critical.*

Programs that rely only on outcome evaluations (which examine the changes in student achievement and the program's success in meeting its goals) do not address the question of whether or not the program was actually implemented as designed. This consideration is critical for special programs for LEP children, since often the realities of classroom instruction can vary tremendously from the plan or program designed at the district level or by the state.

For example, most bilingual education programs are predicated on the assumption that qualified bilingual, biliterate teaching staff will be used in each bilingual classroom. If a local program has failed to assign bilingual teachers to each bilingual classroom, the students are quite likely not receiving the type or amount of instruction planned. Implementation evaluations are designed to address the degree to which the program was actually implemented according to its plan, and should include such items as teacher qualifications, availability of the planned instructional materials, amount of instructional time provided in specified subjects, type of methodology actually used, availability of other planned instructional personnel, and timeliness of program implementation.

It is essential to know whether or not the students ever actually received the full benefit of the program and services that were planned for them. Including implementation evaluations in an assessment plan will help avoid labeling a specific program approach as a failure when in fact the approach was never fully or properly implemented.

2. *Assessment Must Be Tied to Program Goals.*

Evaluation of a program's progress and outcomes must be related to the program's goals. Special programs for LEP children often have widely varying goals that must be taken into consideration in program evaluation. If a program has two or three equally important goals, it is important to measure progress toward each goal, not just one in isolation. For example, many bilingual education programs have two primary goals that are accorded equal weight and significance—helping children acquire English proficiency and providing them with comprehensible instruction so that they may make progress in other curriculum areas. An assessment approach that only examines the first half of that goal might well overlook significant progress (or problems) with the second half. If a program accords each goal equal significance, weight, and resources, so must an evaluation.

Just as it is important to include all major program goals in an assessment, it is essential that items that were never instructional goals during the program not be added as new goals at evaluation time. For example, if the program never had dropout reduction as a goal, then it is not valid to evaluate the program's success based on a reduced number of dropouts among program students. Similarly, if the program was designed to equip children with full English proficiency and not primarily to produce a quick transition to a regular school classroom at some minimal level of proficiency, then it is inappropriate to evaluate the success or failure of the program based on speed of transition. Parenthetically, I might add that choosing speed over competency is a questionable academic goal in any case.

3. *The Total Program Must Be Examined.*

Bilingual education and other special language programs are complex, with a number of variables that are difficult to separate out. A thorough assessment should examine the variety of factors within the program and those variables in the community and wider school or school district that may affect program outcomes.

In dealing with within-program variables, an effort must be made to examine every phase of program services from intake and assessment of students through their reclassification and exit from the program. It is essential to review teacher qualifications, type and efficacy of any teacher inservice training, qualifications of and support for any teacher aides, availability of other bilingual support personnel, parent outreach and involvement efforts, and school-community relations.

Additionally, consider the backgrounds of the specific students being served in the program. Do students have additional special needs that are assessed and addressed? Are there health, mental-health, or social-service needs that must be taken care of before effective learning can occur in any setting? Do lack of affordable housing or unstable employment conditions contribute to a high rate of mobility that disrupts the continuity of education?

Finally, the special program should be examined as it fits into an entire school or district. Is the school climate supportive of learning? Does the building principal actively support the program and its teachers? Is violence or hostility toward language-minority or immigrant students a problem in the community? (Note: Many recent immigrant students report violence or the threat of violence against them as one of the most severe barriers to schooling.) Do central-office administrators and the school board support the program, or are they known to be in opposition to it? Does the district actually allocate extra resources for the provision of services to "high-cost" students such as LEP youngsters? Are these students disproportionately enrolled in low-achieving or segregated schools?

All of this information is useful in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of particular instructional programs for LEP students, since these programs do not exist in isolation. They should be seen in the context of the total school program in which they exist. This is not to say that non-program-specific variables should be used to explain away failure. However, if problems such as unsupportive building administrators, violence directed against language-minority students, inadequate funding, or high mobility and absenteeism are not addressed, it is highly unlikely that any type of instructional program designed for LEP children will succeed. These types of problems, both those residing within the school system and those that are a function of community demographics, must be addressed programmatically and accounted for in evaluation.

4. *Long-Term Assessment Plans Should Be Created Whenever Possible.*

It takes time to fully master a new language—a lot more time than many of us are willing to admit. For children who are also faced with the necessity of adjusting to a radically different culture and life style, the challenges are even more formidable. Both students and programs need sufficient time to work. Program evaluations that measure success or failure based on only nine months of instruction—or two years, or three—often measure very little. The real test of program effectiveness is not the speed with which children reach an arbitrary percentile on a standardized test and can be "exited" from the special program, but rather what happens to these children over time. It is important to give a program design enough time to work and to allow students enough time in the program to benefit from its services.

Additionally, it is preferable to use a longitudinal type of evaluation with as many program participants as possible. Given rates of high mobility in some districts, this can prove difficult, but it is rarely impossible in some form. In addition to assessing the language proficiency and academic performance of children who are currently in the program, one must monitor the performance of the ones who have already left the program. How are they doing in the "mainstream"? Were they, in fact, ready to leave? Do they need any special services? Are they working at grade level in subsequent years?

In conclusion, any type of special program for LEP children must be documented, monitored, and evaluated on a systematic basis. The evaluation plan should look at program-implementation issues, be tied to the specific program goals, include an overview of the total school program, and be longitudinal wherever possible. Because each program—even those that describe themselves with the same name—reflects the particular goals, services, and climate of the school in which it operates, educators should be aware of the pitfalls in trying to talk generically about all "bilingual" programs.

VII. ROLE OF CCSSO AND STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

State education agencies and chief state school officers, as the ultimate authority for education in a state, cannot escape the responsibility for assuring that equal educational opportunity is being provided to all children in the state, regardless of native language or degree of proficiency in English. Case law and federal statutes are quite clear on the right of children to an equitable and appropriate education. Apart from the legal imperative for chief state school officers to exert clear and informed leadership in this area, changing demographics in many states also make better educational opportunities for language-minority residents an economic and social imperative.

The number of minority and language-minority residents is growing steadily in many states. Due to the younger age structure of most of these groups and to continued immigration, that pattern can be expected to continue indefinitely. Thus language-minority and LEP persons are becoming an increasing proportion of the school population and the work force in many states. Legal questions aside, no state can any longer afford to provide educational programs that do not help these individuals acquire both English and the other skills and talents necessary to be productively employed adults with the flexibility to adjust to changing labor-force demands. The same point holds for political participation, as limited-English-proficient persons, the majority of whom are native-born United States citizens, become an increasing part of the American body politic.

Chief state school officers and the state departments of education that they head have the responsibility to ensure that state policies are designed in such a way so as to provide all children in the state—including those not yet proficient in English—with a good education. They also have the responsibility to ensure that children's civil rights are upheld and protected and to assure that there are state procedures for monitoring and redress on these issues. The responsibility to meet the needs of LEP children extends to policies governing teacher training. It is crucial not only to increase the number of those teachers qualified to work in special programs for LEP children but also to improve the capability of regular classroom teachers to provide instruction to linguistically and culturally different children.

In order for states to best ensure effective education for LEP students, chief state school officers and state education agencies should make sure that their states have the following:

1. Adequate and appropriate legislation dealing with the provision of instructional services to children of limited English proficiency. Such legislation should provide guidelines for local education agencies concerning their responsibilities toward LEP children and the program options whereby they may fulfill those responsibilities.
2. Adequate financing for both school districts and the state department of education so that comprehensive programs may be provided for LEP children at the local level and so that adequate levels of training, evaluation, and supportive services may be provided at the state level.
3. An appropriate organizational structure within the state department of education to support the provision of expertise and coordination, technical assistance, compliance reviews, research and evaluation, and other services that will make possible the operation of high-quality bilingual and other special programs for LEP children.
4. A statewide evaluation plan which considers the factors previously outlined pursuant to assessment and evaluation of bilingual and other special programs for LEP children.
5. A plan for longitudinal research to determine results of the allowed program option(s) on various groups of students and to provide local school districts with information on which types of instructional and program features work best in different situations and with different sorts of students.
6. Policies that encourage the adoption of two-way, integrated bilingual programs that include native-English-speakers and in which all children learn two languages. These programs are especially important as we become increasingly aware that knowledge of English and a second language is not only a benefit to the individual and to society but will be a requirement for economic well-being in the years to come.
7. Policies that link foreign-language instructional programs with programs for LEP students in order to expand foreign-language departments and offerings and to promote bilingualism.

VIII. CONCLUSION

To summarize, the majority of states and an ever-growing number of local school districts have LEP children among their students. As this population continues to grow and become a larger proportion of many school systems, more and more educators are faced with the challenge of providing appropriate and effective educational programs. This is a complicated proposition, requiring educators who are well-informed and conversant with the latest research in language development, assessment, evaluation, and second-language instructional methodologies, and administrators who are committed to designing and supporting programs that ensure LEP children equal access to education.

While the overwhelming majority of LEP children in the United States are Hispanic, this is a diverse population. Some communities are faced with the challenge of finding instructional strategies that can reach children from a variety of language backgrounds. While language barriers are among the most formidable for LEP children, educators also must consider other barriers facing these children, many of whom are poor, some of whom are recent immigrants from strife-torn countries, and many of whom come from families long familiar with the discrimination afforded to minority-group members in the United States. While appropriate language instruction is critical, a good program for LEP children must also consider other barriers facing the particular population of LEP children in a district and provide other strategies and services to address as many of those obstacles as possible.

This paper has provided a description of the LEP population in the United States and an overview of the ways in which we as a nation have addressed or failed to address their educational needs. This is a history of which school administrators should be aware, since past neglect explains much of the federal, state, and judicial oversight of this area today. Awareness of past omissions and policies gone awry can also help educators avoid returning to past failed practices even when they are packaged and sold with new labels and claims.

It is a challenge for educators to provide comprehensive and effective programming for LEP children; this is not an easy task for uninformed or inept administrators. Many of our school systems have had difficulty providing instruction for children who do not neatly fit into the "average child" description, and it is evident that our schools have not worked as well for some groups of children as others. However, as the school-age population continues to change so that "at-risk" or "different" children become an ever-larger proportion of the students we serve, we need to look seriously at ways in which we can restructure our programs and policies in order to serve all children well.

In the case of LEP children, this restructuring should probably include a more widespread use of comprehensive two-way bilingual education programs wherever feasible, both to provide LEP children with the best possible instructional program and to help move all our students forward into the twenty-first century, where bilingualism will become an increasing necessity and an economic advantage. It also means abandoning our desire for quick-fix, band-aid types of interventions and recognizing that it takes time for us to teach LEP children and for those children to learn both content curricula and full English-language proficiency.

In order to best meet the needs of the LEP student population, educators should provide high-quality, comprehensive bilingual programs wherever possible. Where this is not possible, comprehensive educational programs based on the most recent and reliable research and designed to teach both English and content areas should be designed and supported.

Finally, educators must resist the pressure and temptation to make decisions affecting the lives of LEP children on ideological versus pedagogical grounds. The attempt of some zealots to protect the English language by outlawing the use of other languages not only threatens the education of a generation of children but flies in the face of our American democratic traditions and the recognition that our country's diversity and cultural pluralism is to be applauded, not repressed.

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ACHIEVEMENT FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

I come from a family of dropouts—three generations' worth in this century. My father was a dropout; I was a dropout; my daughter was a dropout. All three of us dropped out at age sixteen.

Furthermore, throughout this century the story that I bring you of high-school dropouts is the norm, not the exception. What is even more important is that only recently have we become seriously concerned about the problem. I commend the chief state school officers for their leadership in bringing, first to public attention, and hence to action, the matter of educational institutions' effectiveness in serving all their students, particularly those who do not fit neatly into their regimens.

The issue is that many children have not fit neatly into the school organization. Let me return to my family explanation: when my father became a dropout in Ottertail County, Minnesota, in 1908, neither he nor his community thought of him as a dropout. Rather, he was thought of as a "graduate." In 1908, at the age of sixteen, he completed his studies at the one-room rural school near Fergus Falls. The pride that he and his neighbors took in this accomplishment is revealed in the formal photograph taken of him and his eleven fellow graduates (eight women and three men), a photograph that now hangs on my office wall at Harvard. At age sixteen he was a little older than the conventional eighth-grade graduate—a result of his somewhat erratic attendance, otherwise known as truancy, influenced by his family's needs for him to work on the farm and by what we would now call his "limited English proficiency." When he had entered the world of American public education, his English proficiency was not limited, it was nonexistent—not "LEP," but "NEP." Together these factors slowed down his progress through the school. In his neighborhood many then did not complete the eighth grade, let alone high school. In fact, formal education was at such a premium that much to the consternation of his father, who wanted him to remain working on the farm, he went to work the fall after completing the eighth grade. His employment was as a teacher responsible for a neighboring one-room school serving all eight grades. Some years later, after several summer-school courses

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and one year of full-time study, he received his high-school diploma, and many years later, his baccalaureate and graduate degrees. But for the purposes of the statistics, such as they were or are, he was a dropout.

I, too, according to most statistical definitions, was a high-school dropout at age sixteen. Having consulted the school library collection during the fall term of my senior year at West Lafayette (Indiana) High School, a school that prided itself in 1951–52 on having *no* dropouts, I discovered that my age—sixteen—was the "magic age," and furthermore, that I had acquired the necessary number of courses to become eligible for an Indiana high-school diploma. Why, questioned I, should I stick around the high school for the final term of my senior year when I was old enough and had done enough work to be entitled to a diploma? In my view high school was *boring*, and I was eager to see the world. The school, of course, believed that high-school completion was measured in semesters, eight of them, not courses, and that I must be in residence for all eight. I told the principal that I wanted to quit and faced the collective consternation of the principal and my parents. A compromise was negotiated, and I left the high school in January 1952, at age sixteen, to see the world. My point of vision in the world turned out to be a secretary's chair in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University, where I earned seventy-five cents an hour (all of which my parents determined should be saved for future needs). In June I returned to the high school where, despite my absence or truancy during the spring term, I received a diploma.

Twenty-one years later, in 1973, my husband and I shared the collective consternation of my parents when our daughter, age sixteen, announced that she did not wish to continue her education at her New York City high school, which she found oppressive, authoritarian, and mindlessly rule-bound. Her wishes barely preceded the school's similar wishes on its behalf, and she dropped out. To this day she has neither a high-school diploma nor a GED, but—reports her relieved mother—she has acquired bachelor's and graduate degrees.

And why do I engage in this family history? I do so to make two introductory points about historical changes—one about adolescence and a second about attendance—before moving to the main issue, which is achievement, specifically achievement for at-risk children. Adolescents, for any number of reasons, may not wish to pursue full-time study steadily. The wishes of adolescents, unlike those of young children, have the potential to become reality. If adolescents do not want to go to school, they may well not go to school. This is true for adolescents who are academically competent, and it is especially true for those whom academic achievement eludes. Adolescence typically is a turbulent, clannish period, and the traditional structure of the schools does not accommodate well such turbulence or clannishness. Recognition of the nature of adolescence should lead schools to be more flexible in their arrangements for assuring that students gain the learning and the development they need.

Attending school faithfully for twelve years was the exception, not the rule, for most of our history, including much of this century. Only in the last years have we expected everyone to finish high school on the school's schedule. Attendance, continuous for twelve years, has become the expectation for a diverse set of young people at an institution not noted for its universal academic successes or for its flexibility. For students who have established a pattern of failure early in the attendance sequence, such continuation is particularly difficult. In the past, the schools' solution, both conscious and unconscious, has been simply to have such students leave. The current debate focuses upon these at-risk students before and after they become dropouts. In order to bring some clarity to the issue, then, we need to look at attendance patterns.

The fundamental question, however, is not dropouts. Dropouts are simply a manifestation of the problem, not the issue itself. Rather, the task before us is providing young people with the academic skills and the patterns of work and behavior that allow them to participate fully both in this society and in this economy. The issue is achievement—young people's achievement—and the responsibility of the schools to facilitate that achievement. Recently we have tended to believe that a high-school diploma serves as a marker for those skills and values and that the absence of a diploma indicates a similar absence of skills and values. Sometimes it does, and sometimes it does not. Our concern must focus upon helping children to stay in school; however, we also must not be lulled into complacency that students who passively make their way through school will, in fact, always acquire the needed skills and values. The issue is achievement of the skills and values, not graduation per se. We must be particularly concerned about identifying and then assisting those who are at risk, not of dropping out, but rather of failing to achieve those academic skills and values that we believe are essential for effective citizenship. This is a broader mandate than dropout prevention per se because it involves us in looking closely at what actually goes on in our schools, rather than simply counting the number of diplomas that are awarded.

Was there ever a golden age in America when streams of well-behaved, eager, intelligent Dicks and Janes skipped happily to their neighborhood school, accompanied by their friendly pup, Spot, having been fed a nutritious breakfast of orange juice, oatmeal or Ralston, and milk prepared by their white-aproned mother for them and their white-collared father? Only the basal reader series of the 1940s and 1950s thought so. In reality such situations have never been the norm, although we educators have often looked to them as a standard and have organized our institutions on those premises. Today we are recognizing that many of our students do not fit that pattern. In an effort to achieve a historical perspective on this matter, let us look at how three elements have changed in the United States during this century: adolescence, attendance, and achievement.

ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence was invented, so to speak, in this century. In 1904 G. Stanley Hall published his landmark study in two volumes, *Adolescence: Its Psychology* *and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education.* Three years later Hall brought out an abridged version in order that it could be made "available at minimum costs to parents, teachers, reading circles, normal schools, and college classes, by whom the larger volumes have often been used." The abridgment revealed his focus upon the relationship between the particular qualities of adolescence and education or training. Hall's greatest contribution was in popularizing the notion of a distinct and normal period in young people's lives between childhood and adulthood and in bringing to the attention of a newly self-conscious teaching profession that this developmental phase required special attention. Hall's work provided the scholarly justification, though not the political imperative, for the establishment in 1912 of the U.S. government's Children's Bureau, which in its incarnation in the Department of Labor annually published pamphlets on how to rear children.

Hall's scholarly treatise on adolescence would not have found such a wide audience nor would his ideas have been so influential had, in fact, there not been some very substantial changes occurring among adolescents themselves and in the institutions that served them. Fundamentally these changes were in two domains: biology and work. Both of these changes had profound implications for education. Essentially what was happening to American youth was that, largely as a consequence of better health and nutrition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were reaching physical maturity much earlier. For example, the average age of menarche in the United States dropped from sixteen in the middle of the nineteenth century to fourteen in the early years of the twentieth century to twelve and a half today (Hamburg, 1986). Perhaps paradoxically, as the age of puberty has dropped, a number of the social conventions limiting intimacy between the sexes have disappeared. Hence, we find Hall describing this new phenomenon known as adolescence, in which young people were spending much more time together while sexually active, just as fewer social constraints and more freedoms are being presented to them and as schools are trying to retain them longer.

The other fundamental change that occurred simultaneously with Hall's scholarly work was the first major effort to regulate child labor. Also in 1904 the National Child Labor Committee was organized, a group that pushed for federal legislation limiting children's participation in the paid work force. Most of the focus on child labor was upon children working in industrial settings, which were rapidly taking precedence over the predominantly rural and agricultural settings of the nineteenth century. No one seriously imagined that the federal government in Washington could regulate in a significant way a father's importuning of his son for assistance on a fishing trawler or in plowing the back forty, or a mother's need for an elder daughter to help with the younger children or to look after an ill relative. By 1920 the census for the first time revealed that a majority of Americans were no longer living in rural areas, but rather in communities of 2,500 or more. In such circumstances, employment was more easily regulated since it was more likely to occur in settings where wages were paid and in which the work of children was visible to those outside the family. Further, technology was already taking its toll on the unskilled jobs so often filled by the young, whether through the introduction of pneumatic tubes that eliminated the need for cash boys or of the telephone that made direct communication possible, obviating the need for messengers.

As urbanization became widespread, as the unskilled jobs for children diminished, and as the society slowly came to the conclusion that the young needed to learn more, a consensus began to develop that the answer was to keep children longer in school. In many respects this conclusion flew in the face of the biological realities. The concentration of pubescent youth in one setting, often one they found only marginally sympathetic to their interests, was a recipe for administrative difficulties, as all who have taught or administered junior and senior high schools can attest. Biology, however, was to be ignored, at least initially, and the society's needs both to provide more education for the young and to keep them out of a work force which no longer required their unskilled talents prevailed.

By the middle years of the century, sociologists were discovering the significance of the adolescent peer culture and its profound concentration in the schools, isolated as they were from a strong adult culture. Urie Bronfenbrenner wrote of its various manifestations around the world, asserting that the United States version was especially compelling, much more so, for example, than that in either the Soviet or the Swiss societies, in which adult influence seemed greater (Bronfenbrenner, 1970). In postwar, affluent America the adolescent peer culture became the focus of major advertising campaigns aimed at getting the young to buy products specifically oriented to them: music, clothes, motorcycles, fast foods. Increasingly the products became more expensive; one no longer simply bought records, but one needed special equipment to listen to the music. The stand-up radio-phonograph in the family living room gave way to the tape recorder, to the "boom box," and to the CD player. These financial demands could no longer be met by the limited earnings from cutting lawns or babysitting, and part-time employment came to be much more widespread among adolescents. Earlier generations of teenagers who had worked for money probably constituted a smaller fraction of the cohort, particularly those employed during the school year, and typically were expected either to contribute their earnings to the family economy or to save them. What is novel about the pattern of recent teenage employment is that it is more likely to occur during the school year, that it includes large segments of the children of the middle class and probably fewer of the very poor, and that the youngsters are likely to spend a large fraction of their earnings quickly. In spending their earnings immediately and not saving them, the young are simply following the pattern of their elders, who are not saving much either.

Initially, sociologists, particularly James S. Coleman, wrote approvingly of adolescents' early move to employment, believing it preferable to keeping them isolated in the peer-driven schools. "In a rapidly changing, highly rationalized society," Coleman wrote in 1961, "the 'natural processes' of education in the family are no longer adequate. They have been replaced by a more formalized institution that is set apart from the rest of society and that covers an even longer span of time [presumably in school]. As a consequence society is confronted no longer with a set of *individuals* to be trained toward adulthood, but with distinct *social systems*, which offer a united front to the overtures made by adult society" (Coleman, 1961). Coleman's concern with the school extended to the family when he observed that in previous generations—and to his point of view, preferably—a father's primary exchanges with his son had been in connection with the father's activities, such as his work or his helping out at home, and thereby had been appropriate modeling examples for the son. Now, Coleman noted regretfully, the principal locales for father-son interactions were likely to be on the son's turf, at the Little League or in the Boy Scouts, both of which left the adolescents in charge with few opportunities for the grown-ups to provide exemplary models (Coleman, 1961).

Two astute observers of the educational policy scene, Eleanor Farrar McGowan and David K. Cohen, summarized the youth policy statements of the early 1970s: "According to the recent rush of reports, the solution lies in getting adolescents out of schools into work situations; or bringing work into schools so they become more like real life; or somehow combining work and school so that labor and learning can go together. While schools used to be regarded as a better way of preparing to work, work is now seen as a better way of preparing to learn" (McGowan and Cohen, 1977). The adolescent culture had become more than the experts believed the schools could cope with, and the workplace, with what was believed to be a strong culture of its own, appeared to be a good influence on the adolescents and upon the schools. But as we can note from this conference, this judgment has not gone unchallenged, justifying the wisdom of current scholars of adolescence Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Reed Larson, who opine, "Of all stages of life, adolescence is the most difficult to describe" (Csikszentmihalyi and Larson, 1984).

In short, the sixteen-year-old is difficult, and groups of sixteen-year-olds are even more difficult, especially if they are put to tasks not to their liking. The enthusiasm of the early 1970s for sending them to work has waned as we have seen the limitations of the kinds of jobs adolescents get, the reinforcement of the peer culture at the workplace, and the negative effects on their schoolwork of their protracted employment (Greenberger and Steinberg, 1986). The adult American work ethic itself has also suffered severe criticism of late. The idealized nineteenth-century version of a beginner apprenticed to a master craftsman, where one learned a skill or craft as well as a set of attitudes about work, is remote from the experience of a contemporary American adolescent. He or she is more likely to be employed at McDonald's with other adolescents, tallying customers' orders by pushing "workerproof" buttons with pictures, which eliminate the need to read the menu or to compute the bill.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance, particularly in high schools, has been the great educational growth story of the first three-quarters of this century. Whether one follows the data from the federal education office or from the federal census bureau, the figures point toward extraordinary increases in school enrollment and attendance between 1900 and 1975. (The only exception is the modest downward blip of the low-birthrate Depression generation.) Some of this growth is a result of a growing population, but most of it is attributable to students' propensity to remain in school longer, particularly in high school.

The coincidence of the most significant declines in school enrollments, which have occurred during the last dozen years as a result of a decrease in the birthrate, especially for whites, and the current increased public attention to dropouts suggests that school people do not like to be part of a no-growth industry. Accustomed for most of their professional lives to being part of a booming, if not economically prosperous, enterprise, school authorities have in the past dozen years faced the kinds of reductions that private companies faced in the Depression of the 1930s, a time of relative prosperity and growth for the schools. The skeptic must inevitably wonder if this is one reason for the concern about dropouts.

The tale of growth in school attendance can be expressed in many ways. For example, between 1880 and 1950 there was a fiftyfold increase in secondary-school attendance while there was a threefold increase in the population (Educational Policies Commission, 1952). To put it another way: at the beginning of the century, 6 percent of the seventeen-year-olds were high-school graduates, and now 74 percent are. The Census Bureau assures us that if we look at an older cohort of students, many of whom may have obtained their diplomas through passing high-school equivalency examinations such as the GED, as many as 86 percent are high-school graduates (Kominski, 1987). The phenomenal increase in high-school attendance occurred early in this century and substantially ahead of any such increase in other industrialized nations, whose broad access to post-elementary education came after World War II. The following table illustrates this growth (Grant and Snyder, 1986).

These remarkable figures attest to the extraordinary increase in the holding power of schools. What is particularly impressive about these figures is not only that students are remaining in school for more years, but also that the school year grew steadily during the century, and attendance improved. For example, in 1900 the average length of the school term was 144 days, with the average number of days attended by a pupil, 98. By 1920 the year had grown to 162 days and average attendance to 121 days. By 1940 the comparable figures were 175 days with attendance of 151 days, a reflection of the growing acceptance and enforcement of the compulsory education laws passed by most states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Series H 520–530, 1975).

The figures also reflect the greater attraction of high school for girls than for boys. Susan Kingsbury explained in a 1905–1906 study of the prevalence of

Number of High-School Graduates Compared with Population 17 Years of Age: U.S., 1900–1983
(in thousands)

School Year	*Population 17-Year-Olds*	*High-School Graduates*			*#/100 Persons 17-Year-Olds*
		Total	*Boys*	*Girls*	
1899–1900	1489	95	38	57	6.4
1909–1910	1786	156	64	93	8.8
1919–1920	1855	311	124	188	16.8
1929–1930	2296	667	300	367	29.0
1939–1940	2403	1221	579	643	50.8
1949–1950	2034	1200	571	629	59.0
1959–1960	2862	1858	895	963	64.9
1969–1970	3765	2889	1430	1459	76.7
1979–1980	4262	3043	1491	1552	71.4
1982–1983	3934	2890	1420	1470	73.5

fourteen-year-old dropouts that most found schools dreary and were "dulled by the inactive school life" (Graham, 1974). Presumably the girls had a greater tolerance for dreariness and dullness than the boys.

By virtue of the fact that these are national figures, however, they obscure the enormous differences among regions, among different racial, ethnic, or religious groups, and between rural and urban schools. For example, if one looks at the percentage of the children aged six to fourteen who were attending school in 1910, one finds that in the populous New England, middle Atlantic, and north central regions of the country, nearly 90 percent were enrolled, but in the South, where blacks were concentrated, only about 70 percent were.

The variation in school attendance by region reflected the perennial debate about the function of the schools. Were they to sort the children or were they to find means to educate them all? What was the meaning of the "common" school—just for the common people? common to all? a common curriculum? In 1908 the president of Harvard University, Charles William Eliot, entered the discussion and advised, "The teachers of the elementary school ought to sort the pupils and sort them by their evident or probable destinies" (Lazerson and Grubb, 1974). Few pieces of advice from Harvard presidents have ever been so widely followed!

The "evident or probable destinies" rule had profound implication by gender, by ethnicity, by race, and by social class. The simultaneous development of group tests of mental ability and their widespread use after their trials during World War I as the Army Alpha and Beta gave a patina of scientific validity to the sorting activity. Although the testers regularly cautioned against excessive reliance on the tests, they also found strong correlations between scores on the army intelligence tests and school grade location of thirteen- and fourteen-year-old pupils (Yoakum and Yerkes, 1970). Their use coincided with an excessive enthusiasm for the use of scientific principles in school organization and administration in order to bring about greater "social efficiency." Hence, school people were on the lookout for some justifiable means of arranging their pupils, and the new tests and studies of "retardation" (children failing to be promoted on schedule) provided evidence that children of certain ethnicities or social background predictably would be found among the achievers or the non-achievers.

The Russell Sage Foundation became sufficiently concerned about the failure of children to graduate from elementary schools that it undertook a study, led by Leonard P. Ayres, to document the matter. Among city schools, he found in 1908 that for each 1,000 pupils entering first grade, only 263 reached the eighth grade and only 56 reached the fourth year of high school. In less urban North Carolina, the figures were substantially worse: only 139 of the entering 1,000 reached the seventh grade and only two, the fourth year of high school (Ayres, 1909). Ayres, an efficiency enthusiast par excellence, extolled the New York City record card as a means of keeping track of the pupils, noting accurately that unless a system kept records, it would never know how its students were doing or how it was doing with its students. He devised a complicated index of efficiency for fifty-eight cities, according to how well they got their pupils through elementary school. By his lights, Massachusetts communities led the list (Fitchburg, Haverhill, Medford, Quincy, Newton, Somerville, and Malden), while the least successful were Hoboken, Baltimore, Wilmington (for its colored schools), Newark, New Orleans (for its white schools), Camden, and Erie (Ayres, 1909).

For all his interest in administrative remedies, Ayres also deeply believed that the school system itself had a significant role to play in helping the child to master the curriculum so that the child could be promoted. "It is the duty of the school," Ayres wrote, "to find the child, not of the child to discover the school" (Ayres, 1909). Similarly, he deplored the attitude that he found all too prevalent among his fellow educators that "the most rigorous system, with the severest course of study and the lowest percentage of promotions and the highest percentage of retardation is the best system" (Ayres, 1909).

Ayres had also noted among New York City students varying rates of retardation by nationality: German—16 percent; American—19 percent; mixed—19 percent; Russian—23 percent; English—24 percent; Irish—29 percent; Italian—36 percent (Ayres, 1909). The existence of these different ethnic examples of persistence in school became a matter of substantial attention in the following decade and profound criticism subsequently. The prima facie case for the superiority of some ethnic groups over others was made more forcefully by Carl C. Brigham, an assistant professor of psychology at Princeton University, who in 1923 published a volume with a forward by Robert Yerkes, the father of the Army intelligence tests. Brigham analyzed the results of the Army tests, calling his book *A Study of American Intelligence,* and emphasizing the varied scores by ethnicity. He found, for example, that if one ranked foreign-born whites by country of birth, the English, Scots, Dutch, Germans, and Danes led, and the Turks, Greeks, Russians, Italians, and Poles trailed (Brigham, 1923). Whites born in the United States ranked between the Germans and the Danes (Brigham,1923). In an age of scientism, such results were taken seriously by some otherwise well-informed persons.

Scores were not reported for nonwhite United States citizens. In 1940 among black men over twenty-five years of age, the average number of years of school completed was 5.4, while for white men it was 8.3 years. By 1970 those averages had risen to 9.8 years for black men and 12.2 years for white men. The comparable figures for women were higher than for men in high-school completion but lower for college (Series H 602–617, 1970). Later in the decade psychologist Lewis Terman at Stanford University began work on his multivolume work, *Genetic Studies of Genius*. Again ethnicity was reported, but in Terman's work on the gifted, the individuals of Russian extraction did much better. Regardless of whether one accepted an ethnic determinism about ability or achievement, the attention given to the poor showing of some ethnic groups gave educators justification for not pursuing those children's schooling assiduously (Terman, 1925).

One of the first scholars to observe the differential expansion of the high-school population was George S. Counts, whose first published major work, *The Selective Character of American Secondary Education* (1922), found parental occupation to be a prime predictor of children's high-school graduation. Children with a professional parent led the list and children of common laborers were "almost unrepresented" (Counts, 1922). Counts concluded, "Apparently the children of the laboring classes are destined to follow in the footsteps of their fathers," adding that "differences in the extent of educational opportunity are further accentuated through the choice of curricula. As a rule, those groups which are poorly represented in the high school patronize the more narrow and practical curricula, the curricula which stand as terminal points in the educational system and which prepare for wage earning. And the poorer their representation in high school, the greater is the probability that they will enter these curricula. The one- and two-year vocational courses, wherever offered, draw their registration particularly, from the ranks of labor" (Counts, 1922).

With Counts' landmark study, one sees the transition from the concern with attendance to its relationship to curriculum. As early as the turn of the century, reformers who sought to retain children at risk of dropping out believed that the most effective means of keeping them in schools was to give them a curriculum that was "practical." By "practical" they meant practical for the working class. What was "practical" for the children of the professionals who might go on to college was the classical curriculum, heavy on Latin and occasionally Greek, with history, English, algebra, geometry, and one or more of the sciences. What was "practical" for the rest were vocational courses of one kind or another, including home economics for the girls, and modified academic subjects intended to reflect some real-world problem, such as business arithmetic. The assumption was that the classical academic courses were either too difficult or not of interest for the increasingly large proportion of children who were remaining in school.

Retention became the issue, and with retention came very significant changes in the curriculum. Some of these changes were enormously beneficial for students, such as the inclusion of non-Western material in the world history course. But most of the changes were efforts to "water down" the curriculum so that it could be learned by those whom the school had concluded—either on the basis of their "evident or probable destiny," their achievement to date, their attitudes, or some combination of these traits—were unlikely to prosper in the traditional course of studies. In 1915, for example, when the expansion of the high schools was just beginning, 37.3 percent of the public-school pupils were taking Latin, compared with 7.8 percent in 1949, the last year that the federal government reported school Latin enrollments. Geometry dropped during this period from 22.7 percent to 12.0 percent, physics from 15.3 percent to 5.4 percent, and United States and English history from 50.5 percent to 22.8 percent (Series H 545-571, 1975). These changes in the curriculum undoubtedly enhanced retention, and as Ayres had shrewdly noted, children could not be taught if they did not come to class.

The broader question, though, is: how valuable was the curriculum that the children were learning? Certainly of the many studies that have been done evaluating vocational education, there has been no evidence that completion of vocational studies has enhanced students' long-term employment. There is substantial evidence throughout this period until the present that many high-school graduates do not read, write, or think as well as one would hope. Thus the issue turns not on attendance but rather on achievement.

ACHIEVEMENT

Just as there was no golden age of Dicks and Janes skipping merrily off to school, so also there was no golden age when all students mastered an academic curriculum. Speaking on secondary education in 1930, Thomas Briggs, a professor at Teachers College, Columbia, lamented that "the authorities have made no serious efforts to formulate for secondary schools a curriculum which promises maximum good to the supporting state." He added, "The second count of the indictment would be that there has been no respectable achievement even in the subjects offered in the secondary school curricula" (Briggs, 1930). Briggs then cited several examples: in a select group of entering university freshmen, only half were able to find the value of b when given the equation $by = 2$; half the students having completed a year of high-school American history failed to identify the Monroe Doctrine; and "only 29 percent of the freshman boys and 37 percent of the freshman girls at Indiana University could give the title of the chapter or formulate in any terms the chief problem discussed by the author" in a passage of English prose that they had had two days to study (Briggs, 1930, pp. 125–128). At a time when nationally less than 30 percent were graduating from high school and just over 10 percent were attending college, such results indicate that high-school graduation even then did not bring universal academic achievement.

Achievement means more than explaining *by* = 2. Rather, it is the attainment of a set of skills, of knowledge, and of values that encourage one to learn on one's own, to participate fully in the society, and to be able to be employed.

Why place such a premium on academic achievement? Because the skills, knowledge, and values that come with academic achievement are inherently valuable as students seek adult roles in the society. Mastering such material gives students an introduction to the world and its mysteries as well as some tools with which to explore the world further. It allows them to benefit not just from the limited experiences that inevitably they have had but rather to learn vicariously, thus expanding enormously their range of experience. The parts of the world the students may wish to explore are up to them to choose. Their achievement must be comprehensive enough, however, that they understand the range of exploration that is available. In short, the students' mastery of the curriculum must prepare them so that they are able to choose either their probable destiny or an improbable one. Both the students and the society are well served if each student is provided a solid foundation of academic achievement that will permit a maximum of personal and vocational choice in adulthood.

Academic achievement for all students is also valuable because schooling is the universal experience of United States children, and success in school, therefore, is very important to the development of these youngsters' self-esteem. When our children fail in school, either directly by not passing courses or indirectly by passing from one class to the next but without significant learning, then the development of self-esteem is likely to be severely jeopardized. Since schooling is ostensibly at least about learning, we need to find the circumstances that will allow the child to learn and to learn that which we believe everyone needs to know. Learning is the essence of academic achievement, and it is the universal accomplishment we seek for our young. The achievement will come at different rates and in various forms, but our task is to make sure that it occurs, for it is liberating for the individual both intellectually and personally, and necessary for the society politically and economically.

The goal for all students, then, is achievement. It is really an expanded definition of literacy: the ability to read, to communicate, to compute, to make judgments, and to take actions resulting from them (Graham, 1981).

What is the best way to acquire such literacy? By mastering through study, generally in school, a curriculum that includes English, well-written and important pieces of literature, mathematical reasoning, principles and practical examples of scientific accomplishments, knowledge of the past, familiarity with the arts, and perhaps a foreign language.

To what extent does this look like the current curriculum? Certainly it resembles the curriculum taught to many college-bound students at our most prestigious public and independent schools. These are places where a senior may, for example, take a seminar on contemporary China in which he or she reads Orvill Schelle, Jr., Ross Terrill, and Fox Butterfield, as well as Chairman Mao and Sun Yat Sen.

But surely some of the experienced educators among us may say, "We all want to help at-risk children, but you can't expect them to be able to read about contemporary China. They can't do that. Their reading levels are not up to it; China is not relevant to them." But that is exactly what I am suggesting—that we can and must find ways for our most at-risk students to be able to read and understand material about China, even though it is half a globe away, or about any other subject that we believe appropriate for our most able students. Furthermore, I believe that efforts to have at-risk children gain mastery of such a curriculum will be more fruitful in reducing their risk than any other single effort schools can undertake. I certainly do not believe that focus on achievement *alone* will resolve the riskiness of their situation, but I do believe that such academic achievement is fundamental to their—and to our—success.

From the considerable literature currently available about school dropouts and children who are at risk, we know that today, unlike the past, there is one characteristic that is true for nearly all of them: they are not doing well academically. This may or may not reflect their academic ability. It may or may not be tied to bad behavior in school or erratic attendance. It may or may not be linked to problems they are facing in their personal lives or at home. It may or may not be related to poor instruction from their teachers.

The causes of low achievement are multiple, but the consequences for the child are unitary: failure alienates students. For years we have tried to mitigate these effects by special promotion, by avoiding failure, which we understand to be demoralizing. But youngsters are clever; they know they are not succeeding academically just because they are moving to the next grade. They know when they are not mastering the material. We have tried to camouflage the problem by expecting less of them: by requiring little homework, by reducing reading assignments, by eliminating term papers. We have replaced reading real books, many of which are interesting, with texts that are uniformly dull, if controlled for difficulty and, therefore, "accessible" to poor readers. But what good is a text if it is accessible but not interesting? How will students ever develop habits of reading unless they find that reading satisfies a curiosity or a need? In an effort to improve their skills, we give them more and longer work sheets, the essence of dullness. What effort do we make to capture their imaginations?

The argument then is that a weakened, simplified, dull curriculum is not a good way to serve at-risk or any other kinds of students. Rather, what we need is a lively course of study. John Dewey once explained that what the wisest parent wants for his child should be what society wants for all its children. This does not mean that everyone reads *Macbeth, Julius Caesar,* and *King Lear* alternating with *Silas Marner* and *The Tale of Two Cities,* but it does mean that everyone reads books, and books that have literary merit. It does not mean that every student writes an original twenty-page research paper, but it does mean that every student is taught how to compose clear, forceful prose based on facts, not just opinions.

But how to achieve this? First, we must agree that not all knowledge is of equal worth. Some—typically what we teach our college-bound students in an academic track—is considered by most in this society to be of greater worth than that which is taught in the general track. That is why the college-bound students get the instruction. That curriculum is not stagnant, of course, but it changes in relation to what we believe our future leaders need to know. Thus it is a useful political indicator of what knowledge is of most worth at a given time in a society. In 1916 John Dewey observed in *Democracy and Education,* "Democracy cannot flourish where the chief influences in selecting subject matter . . . are utilitarian ends narrowly conceived for the masses, and for the higher education of the few, the traditions of a specialized cultivated class" (Dewey, 1916). If that was true seventy years ago, it is certainly true today and is a profound critique of the "practical" and "relevant" curricula we offer our low-achieving students.

Second, we must devise new and better ways to teach material to children who do not appear to have the skills to learn it. In short, we need to reverse our historical method of coping with low-achievers in school. In the past, we modified the curriculum, reducing its content to fit our view of the child's abilities, but we kept our pedagogy essentially the same: teacher lectures, individual work sheets, some routinized question-and-answer exchange between teachers and students, and—most commonly—unfocused discussion. In the future, we must modify the pedagogy radically so that all children can learn the curriculum, a course of study in which they can take pride in their achievement.

The implications of this assertion for teachers, of course, are enormous. First, teachers need to believe that the curriculum they teach their most able students is itself valuable and also viable for those who show less achievement. Many believe in their Advanced Placement course, but teachers' sense of their own status sometimes rests on the hierarchical pattern of AP being better than general track. Efforts to convince teachers that students on the general track might tackle subjects similar to those of AP students inevitably will find much resistance among teachers, particularly if the teachers are expected to reconceptualize their teaching styles in order for the general-track students to learn the material.

Second, then, major efforts need to be undertaken with teachers and school administrators to find ways to reorganize classroom structures, the school day, and even the school unit itself so that pedagogy can be overhauled. Time spent on some subjects, such as English or mathematics, may need to be much longer for some students than others. Teaching of students by other students may be valuable for both the tutors and the tutees. Cooperative rather than solely individual solutions to academic tasks may prove helpful. Paradoxically, what we have always called "cheating" in the classroom is what we have lauded as "teamwork" on the athletics field or in the business organization. Undoubtedly, smaller school units are preferable to the 3,000- or 4,000-student high schools common in many cities.

Finally, and potentially the most important, we may find ways to use the new technologies constructively to enhance all students' and all teachers' learning. In their capacity to diagnose a pupil's learning obstruction and then to help the child get over it, the new technologies may be a powerful enhancement to a teacher's effort to move the student along. In sum, we need to rethink how we teach the at-risk student rather than reduce what we teach. *What* we teach to the at-risk student needs to be substantially the same as what we teach to others, but *how* we teach it needs to be dramatically altered.

This is a radical proposal, for it breaks with our tradition of changing the curriculum and ignoring the pedagogy. It is also radical because it rests on the assumption that with suitable instruction a much higher proportion of our children can learn more than they presently do. It is also radical in that it calls on teachers and administrators to alter their past practices and change their ways. The teachers and administrators need to assume responsibility for their professional lives and demonstrate their skills. Surely if we believe that children can learn more, we must believe that teachers and administrators can grow professionally.

I am cautiously optimistic about our progress in bringing about these changes. First, with regard to the constancy of the curriculum and the ability of more to learn it, we have much evidence from other nations that much higher proportions of children there can achieve greater academic skills, at least, than do children in this country. Americans continue to believe that in academic matters, ability rather than effort determines the outcome. Others, especially the Japanese, believe that effort is more important than ability. Our legacy of those Army Alpha tests and our belief in them apparently remain strong! Clearly, both ability and effort are needed, but if our children began to give the protracted attention to their schoolwork that many now do to basketball practice, fixing their hair, or working at the fast-food chain, we might see remarkable changes in their academic achievement. In addition, at the moment there is a public concern about achievement, a concern that has fluctuated in past decades. Such public attention may usefully be focused on enhancing student achievement, including working harder at learning. That is the most positive interpretation that can be given to the new testing enthusiasms of the state legislatures. The issue, of course, is not the tests themselves, but creating the conditions for the students that will allow them to pass the tests.

Second, both political will and pedagogical expertise are necessary for the broad increase in academic achievement, and the political will seems more likely to be forthcoming now than at any time in recent memory. The public interest in at-risk children or potential dropouts is hopeful, combined as it is with concerns about American productivity. The measures may be crude, such as simply raising cut-off scores for teacher certification or averages for high-school graduation, but without such evidence of concern from the public, alas, it is not clear that educators alone would have been able to raise these issues effectively or address them adequately.

The attention is now shifting to educators. Do we have the pedagogical expertise to take many more of our children successfully through the academic curriculum? The evidence is stark that in the past we have had neither the political will nor the pedagogical expertise to do so. What of the future?

Expecting genuine pedagogical expertise of teachers is nearly a new development. Initially, we wanted them to be moral and to care for children. The conventional attack on teachers in turn-of-the-century America was that they were either immoral or mean, occasionally both. More recently we have come to insist that teachers, in addition, be knowledgeable about their subjects. We have come to believe that most teachers meet a necessary standard of human decency, but we fear that too many are neither knowledgeable about nor committed to the subjects they are teaching. Most recently, we are demanding that teachers not only be moral, nice, and knowledgeable, but that they also be effective in employing a repertoire of pedagogical skills to reach diverse students. "After all," the dubious layman might ask, "isn't that what we are supposed to get from the universities with their schools of education and teacher-certification programs?" Yes, that is what our society ought to expect from these institutions, and no, it is not what has been coming from them, primarily because neither the schools nor the society heretofore has taken seriously mastery of academic material by all students. The hopeful response, however, is that more pedagogically expert teachers may be forthcoming from these institutions in the future, particularly if the society remains concerned about enhancing the learning of the many who traditionally have not learned much academically. The universities, which generally have not seriously thought or done much about teacher education for several decades, have begun to address the matter again, stimulated by the public outcry about both the oncoming teacher shortage and questions about teacher competence, not primarily in pedagogy but in subject matter.

Third, if pedagogical expertise is to be sought in teachers, then it must be valued in schools. That would be a profound change from current practice in many schools. Larry Cuban has written persuasively about the persistence of a limited pedagogical repertoire among teachers, attributing this relatively narrow range of teacher behaviors largely to the school and classroom structures, which he believes "established the boundaries within which individual teacher beliefs and an occupational ethos worked their influences in shaping a practical pedagogy" (Cuban, 1984). It is this "situationally constrained choice" that must change so that the schools themselves organizationally value individuals who manifest a range of pedagogical expertise. It is likely that high schools will find this difficult; elementary schools, easier; and middle or junior-high schools, where the need is greatest, most difficult since their students are the most obstreperous and their faculties are least clear about their identity as elementary or secondary teachers.

Scheduling that allowed for the primacy of pedagogy rather than school bus routes, lunch arrangements, or athletics events might appear very different. An organizational hierarchy that reflected the importance of pedagogy within the school would be unique. An accountability system that focused on the achievement of all the students with special attention to those who had not been achieving previously would place a premium on the skills of those teachers who were able to help low-achieving students as well as those who help high-achieving ones. Heretofore, administrators have often been eager to keep children enrolled, even if not in attendance, so that funds based on registered students would not decline. Teachers, however, have had absolutely no incentive other than a private professionalism to keep in their classes low-achieving, occasionally disruptive students. Sometimes teachers have seen those students' absences as a blessing and a relief. In sum, the school must see its goal not just as keeping children on its books or even graduating them, but rather as enabling them to master an academic curriculum. That would be a big change.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me make six suggestions about ways of enhancing the likelihood that such change might occur:

1. Keep public attention on the at-risk children and on the necessity for collaboration among different groups to serve these children. My simple definition of a child who is at risk in school is one who is not achieving academically. Children are at risk in many other domains, through poverty, health, family, or community circumstances. The task of the school itself is to overcome the school problem, and the school will be helped in its efforts to do this by sustained public attention to the issue. But the school cannot solve all the problems of the at-risk child by itself. As the eminent historian of black education, Horace Mann Bond, observed, "Of one thing, at least, we can be sure: that is, the unsoundness of relying upon the school as a cure-all for our ills" (Bond, 1934). Other problems inevitably influence the academic ones, but if the school does not concentrate on alleviating the academic difficulties, then the likelihood that they will be resolved is nil. The school *building* may well be a place where other valuable services are provided, such as health clinics, child care, hot meals, showers, athletics programs, entertainment, and various social services, but the use of the building should not intrude on the primacy of the academic component. The Beethoven Project in Chicago

may well provide a useful example of the successful integration of services for persons at risk, especially children.

2. Allow flexibility among different schools to develop means to educate their clientele. Monitor the results, but do not prescribe the solutions. Focus on improving the students' academic performances, not on mandating the means by which the schools achieve this goal. This is particularly important for schools with high proportions of previously low-achieving students. Such flexibility flies in the face of a generation of increasingly complex regulatory requirements for schools and districts laid upon them by federal and state governments. Too often some of those regulations have contradicted good pedagogical practice, usually by limiting the options available to a teacher or administrator. The opportunity and responsibility for teachers, administrators, and others concerned with the schools to devise programs at the community level may contribute more to developing the necessary political will and pedagogical expertise than any regulations could ever do. Federal and state governments need to give leadership, including financial assistance, to the issue of improving the education of at-risk children, but that leadership needs to leave room for individual districts and even buildings to devise means of improving the academic achievement of their students. Our knowledge of how to do this is not at present so precise that we can wisely tell schools how they must get such increases in achievement. In the absence of such specific knowledge, experimentation at the local level with a clear goal in mind is appropriate.

3. Replace some of the excessively detailed regulation now limiting schools' flexibility with some new models of collaborative evaluation. As long as there is clarity about the goal—attaining much greater academic achievement for all children, particularly ones at risk—then there may be opportunities for a variety of school visits by teams composed of local, state, and perhaps federal educators to evaluate the success of the school in meeting this goal and in spending the money allocated to do so. Such visits might supplement and perhaps significantly supplant some of the quantitative reporting now in such vogue. No one seeks a return to the unfocused experimentation typical of the 1960s, which spawned much of the current regulatory need. Nonetheless, opportunities for persons who are committed to assisting schools in serving their students to spend time in schools and to assess the schools' means of doing so might be quite helpful.

   Such visits would be an amalgam of our current accreditation visits and the British Inspectorate in education. They would be tightly focused on whether the students were achieving academically and what the school was doing—or failing to do—to make that happen. Participation in such visits would bring federal, state, and local education personnel much closer to the realities of instruction as experienced at the school site and hence would inform them about what is reasonable to require and what is not. Participation for local educators would be useful as they returned to their own schools, where they might adopt some effective practices observed at another school. For the personnel at the school being visited, the occasion of the visit would provide the opportunity to assess realistically how successfully they are educating their students and to seek a greater variety of evidence to present their views. When only test scores or grade-level calculations are used to determine schools' success with their students, many other informative examples are lost. Portfolios of student work, interviews with students, and observations of classes are all revealing of school life. Even more important, collegial and collaborative exchanges among educators concerned about the issue may be both helpful and supportive of the larger cause of increasing student achievement.

4. Attract to education people who are passionate about their subject and compassionate in their dealings with others. Unless both teachers and administrators have passion and compassion as preeminent qualities and are rewarded for them, they will find it difficult to lead schools in which pedagogical expertise is valued and learning is expected. To find such individuals we may need to change our recruitment strategy from one that relies so heavily on college undergraduates to one that reaches out more broadly to the adult population. There may well be many passionate and compassionate adults who might not want to spend their entire careers in schools but who might well want to spend five, ten, or fifteen years there. Most adults no longer spend their entire lives performing one job, and our schoolchildren would benefit from more imaginative recruiting practices—and more flexible preparation programs for teachers. Not all schools are likely to be staffed entirely by these passionate and compassionate persons, but it is essential that each school building have a cadre of them to set its tone.

   State education departments have a key role to play here in encouraging colleges and universities to establish more innovative, less hidebound programs to prepare teachers. The present regulatory jungle for certification in many states is a nightmare. Many colleges follow the state prescriptions to a fine detail in order that their graduates will be certified. This does not persuade imaginative, iconoclastic souls to enter teaching or able people in schools of education to work with preservice programs.

5. Examine more closely the GED and other similar programs now extant throughout the United States, and their varied success in helping their clients pass the examinations and establish high-school equivalency. Are these valid examinations? Do they, in fact, measure the skills, knowledge, and values that we seek in high-school graduates? What would be better

ways to prepare individuals? What are the characteristics of successful programs, and to what extent can their elements be incorporated into high schools' efforts to serve at-risk students? Liana Champagne has found, for example, that state-funded GED programs have greater success with their students than other programs (Champagne, 1983). While we want to improve the high-school program for at-risk students, we also want to assure that other options remain for those students for whom high school was not a success. There will always be some such students. The GED programs are a key alternative example.

6. Work as educators with other segments of the society to bring about the fundamental social change that will ultimately alleviate the problems of the at-risk population. Schools cannot eliminate poverty, but educators can act politically to bring about reforms. One enormous benefit that has come from the organization of teachers into bargaining units has been a heightened political consciousness and skill at both the federal and state levels. Let us as educators play a major role in political leadership. Our support could be crucial for social programs that would reduce poverty—especially for children who are now poorer than at any other time in our recordkeeping history—that would enhance employment, that would improve health care, and that would enlarge preschool programs. This would be political activity not just to enhance ourselves narrowly but rather to enhance the lives of the children whom we see at risk. In doing so, of course, we enhance ourselves broadly, for they are our future.

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PRODUCTIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

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Before recommending educational practices, we should reflect carefully about the meaning of "at-risk youth." Many educational psychologists and I think of at-risk youth as those who score relatively poorly, particularly in the early grades, on achievement tests in the standard school subjects. It is therefore worthwhile first to discuss the reasons why such tests are better indications of risk and its likely consequences than are alternative indicators.

ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

The chief purpose of schooling is learning, and learning may be reasonably indexed by standardized achievement tests in reading, mathematics, science, and other school subjects. Such tests do not reveal all the intangible outcomes of schooling, but we have little evidence that students who cannot read, calculate, and think scientifically as revealed by achievement tests are likely to do better on other educationally worthy outcomes. Nor do we have reason to believe that students who have not mastered civics, English, foreign languages, geography, history, and other subjects are advantaged in other ways.

Even those who demur must admit that groups with ultimate legal responsibility for public education—legislatures and state and local school boards—have widely and increasingly evaluated the outcomes of schooling by means of scores on national or locally designed achievement tests. Before us also is the prospect of a new and vastly expanded National Assessment of Educational Progress that would allow achievement comparisons of states, and better comparisons of districts, schools, and students within states. Whether the educational establishment desires it or not, governors, legislators, citizens, and parents are demanding accountability and achievement comparisons (National Governors' Association, 1986; Walberg and Keefe, 1987).

By achievement test criteria, nearly all American youth are relatively at risk. The National Commission on Excellence in Education warned us, in *A Nation At Risk* (1983), about the underperformance of United States students on achievement tests; but recent data provide an even grimmer picture with respect to the subject of mathematics[1] (although other subjects could be cited). Among samples of students at the end of primary school in two provinces of Canada and in a dozen other countries, United States eighth-grade students scored third from the bottom. Among the top 5 percent of twelfth-graders at the end of secondary school, United States twelfth-graders ranked last among Western countries and Japan;[2] they exceeded only the less economically developed countries in Africa and South America (U.S. Department of Education, 1986, pp. 28–30). So it seems arbitrary to conclude that only some fraction of our students, say the lower 10 percent or those in poverty, are at risk.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND OTHER INDEXES

Indeed, a common but misleading stereotype holds that only big-city children in enduring poverty are at risk. Actually, poverty in the United States is not concentrated merely in the largest rust-belt cities, and it endures less frequently than commonly thought. In the only recent large-scale longitudinal study of family income and status, Duncan's (1984) analysis of about 5,000 American families showed substantial social mobility. Of families in the top or bottom 20 percent of income in 1971, for example, only about half remained in these classifications in 1978. Between 1969 and 1978, 25 percent of the families fell below official poverty lines in at least one year, but less than 3 percent remained below in eight or more of the ten years. Even these persistently poor belied stereotypes: two-thirds lived in the South; one-third were elderly; and only a fifth lived in large cities.

Nor is socioeconomic status (SES) itself a large determinant of how much children learn in school. White (1976) collected 636 correlation coefficients of SES indexes with ability and academic achievement from 101 studies. In White's synthesis, the average correlations of test performance with parent income, occupation level, and education were respectively .31, .20, and .19. The average SES-learning correlation was .25, which suggests that SES accounts on average for about 6 percent of the variance in learning. These correlations reveal that although higher SES children outperform lower SES children on average, many lower SES children outperform their middle-class peers. Thus contrary to the great importance given to parental SES by some sociologists, its association with learning is surprisingly weak; and SES appears to constrain learning and social ascendancy far less than many believe. As indicated in subsequent sections of this chapter, moreover, many alterable school and home conditions have far more powerful influences than SES on how much children learn.

Nor are other categories particularly helpful in diagnosing risk. Racial, cultural, language, and ethnic classifications of students may be useful to social scientists who wish to characterize groups. However, for psychologists and educators, such classifications can conceal large, educationally decisive variations among individuals within groups. Such classifications, moreover, can lead to arbitrary and misleading categorization and to stereotyping or invidious labeling of group members. Many special-education classifications,[3] moreover, may be even worse because they are unreliable, perhaps even scientifically spurious, and also tend toward undeserved permanent classifications and psychological harms (Wang, Reynolds, and Walberg, 1987).

ACHIEVEMENT TEST VALIDITY

In the early elementary grades, poor test scores predict subsequent poor achievement, absenteeism, and dropping out better than any other index. Indeed, it has been difficult to find an index that generally adds much accuracy to the risk prediction of such sequelae beyond that already accounted for by relatively poor early achievement.

Achievement test scores are preferable to IQ and other ability tests for reasons best illustrated in an important paper in *Science* by Stevenson, Lee, and Stigler (1986), who studied Chinese, Japanese, and American elementary-school mathematics classes. Cross-nationally calibrated IQ tests showed that all three groups were equally able at the start of schooling; but with each year, Asian students drew further ahead in achievement. A small achievement advantage at the end of the first grade grew even larger, so that by fifth grade, the worst Asian class sample exceeded the best United States class. (This "Matthew effect" of the educationally rich getting richer has been observed in many United States studies. See Walberg and Tsai, 1983.)

The Asian students had a far more rigorous curriculum and worked at a faster pace; they studied far more at school and, with their parents' encouragement, at home, especially those who temporarily fell behind in achievement. In the United States, success was more often attributed to ability; in Asia, to hard work. Like the dangers of racial, ethnic, and special-education classifications, ability tests encourage a belief in educational predestination rather than effort, the amount and quality of instruction, and parental involvement as keys to achievement.

Finally, achievement tests are useful because they immediately and directly diagnose a student's problems and accomplishments. Since scores vary continuously, students need not be classified as bright or dull; rather, each student can be seen as on a continuously ascending scale. If detailed diagnosis is desired, tests may also provide indications of gaps in specific knowledge such as multiplication facts, in skills such as sentence combining, or in "higher processes" such as self-monitoring ("meta-cognition") in reading.

In summary, achievement tests have the advantages of educational and psychological plausibility, accuracy, and validity in risk assessment; and they avoid the expense, time, unreliability, misclassification, and harms of other means of risk assessment. They also provide measures of accomplishment and diagnosis and concentrate attention on the tangible and reasonably agreed-upon ends of schooling. Given these ends, consider the most effective and productive means.

EFFECTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE EDUCATION

A few working definitions may be useful. For the purpose of this discussion, effectiveness may be defined as the attainment of educational goals, mainly the maximization of learning in a broad sense. Effectiveness, of course, varies by degrees; and the degrees may be measured by the amounts learned, most often indicated on achievement tests. Efficiency or productivity may be thought of as a ratio of the amount learned (or its value) to the resources consumed or their full costs. Resources include not only financial expenditures on buildings, equipment, and staff, but also the valuable human time and effort of administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

Educators, parents, and students can work longer and harder (National Commission, 1983); but they can also work more productively (Walberg, 1983). Since 1975 my colleagues and I have tried to develop a comprehensive framework for the analysis of productivity and test it out in a variety of classroom studies in the United States and other countries. To this framework and related investigations I now turn.

A THEORY OF EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

In recent years, several scientific breakthroughs have occurred in the analyses of large-scale educational surveys and in the syntheses of thousands of educational research results (see subsequent references for details). These surveys and studies show that nine factors increase learning. Potent, consistent, and widely generalizable, these nine factors fall into the three groups shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Nine Educational Productivity Factors

Student Aptitude

1) *Ability,* or preferably *prior achievement*, as measured by the usual achievement tests
2) *Development* as indexed by chronological age or stage of maturation
3) *Motivation* or self-concept as indicated by personality tests or by the student's willingness to persevere intensively on learning tasks

Instruction

4) The *amount* of time students engage in learning
5) The *quality* of the instructional experience, including psychological and curricular aspects

Psychological Environments

6) The *"curriculum of the home"*
7) The *morale* of the classroom social group
8) The *peer group* outside school
9) Minimum leisure-time *television* viewing

Collectively the various studies suggest that the three groups of nine factors are powerful and consistent in influencing learning. Syntheses of about 2,575 studies suggest that these generalizable factors are the chief influences on achievement and, more broadly, on cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning. Many aspects of these factors, especially the amount and quality of instruction, can be altered by educators; and these deserve our attention, especially in improving educational opportunities for at-risk youth.

Each of the first five factors—prior achievement, development, motivation, and the quantity and quality of instruction—seems necessary for learning in school; without at least a small amount of each, the student can learn little. Large amounts of instruction and high degrees of ability, for example, may count for little if students are unmotivated or instruction is unsuitable.

These first five essential factors, however, are only partly alterable by educators. For example, the curriculum in terms of lengths of time devoted to various subjects and activities is partly determined by diverse economic, political, and social forces. Ability and motivation, moreover, are influenced by parents, by prior learning, and by students themselves. Thus educators are unlikely to raise achievement substantially by their own efforts alone.

The remaining factors—the psychological climate of the classroom group, enduring affection and academic stimulation from adults at home, and an out-of-school peer group with academic interests, goals, and activities—influence learning in two ways. Students learn from them directly, and these factors also benefit learning indirectly by raising student ability, motivation, and responsiveness to instruction. In addition, about ten (not the average of twenty-eight) weekly hours of leisure-time television viewing seems optimal for learning, perhaps because more television-viewing time displaces homework and other educationally and developmentally constructive activities outside schools.

The last four psychological factors may directly supplement as well as indirectly influence the essential classroom factors. In either case, the powerful influences of out-of-school factors, especially the home environment, must be considered. The twelve years of 180 six-hour days in elementary and secondary school add up to only about 13 percent of the waking, potentially educative time during the first eighteen years of life.

If more of the 87 percent of the student's waking time nominally under the control of parents that is spent outside school were to be spent in academically stimulating conditions in the home and peer groups, then the student's total learning time might be raised beyond the 13 percent of the time in conventional American schools. For instance, the average of twenty-eight hours a week high-school students spend viewing television might usefully be added to the mere four or five weekly hours of homework (Walberg and Shanahan, 1983). Europeans and Japanese believe homework helps learning; empirical results of American research support their belief. But instruction in school can also help—it is a case of "both-and," not "either-or."

Other social factors influence learning in school, but are less directly linked to academic learning. For example, class size, financial expenditures per student, and private governance (independent or sectarian in contrast to public control of schools) correlate weakly with learning, especially if the initial abilities of students are considered. Thus improvements in the more direct and more alterable factors hold the best hope for increasing educational productivity (Walberg and Shanahan, 1983).

METHODS OF RESEARCH

Unlike other national studies of education that have relied on hearings and testimony, our investigations of educational productivity followed applied research in the natural sciences in several respects (Walberg, 1983). Since its inception, the theory of educational productivity (discussed above) guided the inquiry (Walberg, 1986). The theory is sufficiently explicit to test; and, using large bodies of national and international data, a wide variety of empirical studies of it were conducted.

My colleagues and I published about two dozen of these empirical studies in research journals of the American Educational Research Association and the American Psychological Association that require review by referees as in other scientific disciplines. Only after extensive observation and some modifications of the theory (notably the addition of television and peer group to the list of major factors) were the implications drawn in professional and policy journals such as *Daedalus*, *Educational Leadership*, and *Phi Delta Kappan*. Like other explicit scientific theories, however, the theory of educational productivity should be considered open to disproof in part or whole by empirical contradiction.

In our investigations, we tried to follow three scientific canons—parsimony, replication, and generalizability. In this context, parsimony means that the theory converges on the least number of factors that powerfully and consistently predict or explain cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning.

In this regard, the theory is reductionistic and psychological. It fundamentally assumes that academic learning is an individual affective, behavioral, and cognitive activity that takes place mainly in the social context of the classroom group as well as in the home and peer group. This is not to deny the influence of Washington, the statehouse, the community, the superintendent, and the principal, but to encourage examination of their effects on the nine factors directly impinging on individual students. Thus, from our view, economic, political, and sociological characteristics and conditions are less relevant to learning because their influences are less alterable, direct, and observable. They are not substitutes for the nine factors, but are more distant forces that can support or interfere with them.

More and less productive classes, moreover, may be expected in the same school. It is somewhat misleading to characterize a whole school or district as effective—just as it is less accurate to characterize an optimal condition of plant growth in terms of the average annual rate of rainfall in a state or farm than it is to characterize it in terms of the amount of rain and irrigation that reaches the roots of a single plant in a given time period.

The educational productivity theory itself is admittedly oversimplified because learning is clearly affected by school and district characteristics as well as by many economic, sociological, and political forces at the school, community, state, and national levels. Yet these characteristics and forces—such as the sex, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status of the student, the size and expenditure levels of schools and districts, and their political and sociological organization—are less alterable in a democratic, pluralistic society. They are also less consistently and powerfully linked to learning and appear to operate mainly through the nine factors in the determination of achievement. Thus we offer our theory, not as a threat to those who see the efficacy of other factors, but as a friendly, collegial invitation to demonstrate the effects of other factors on those we have named or directly on achievement and other outcomes of learning.

The canon of replication, in our view, means that the findings in similarly designed studies should reproduce one another fairly closely. For example, reinforcement or reward of learning has been implemented in various forms, such as candy, tokens, symbols, and social recognition. It can be and indeed usually is operationally defined in detail in various studies. The question is whether these forms are the same or different in their effects.

To answer this question, the various implementations or strategies grouped under the same category may be more finely categorized and empirically compared in their effects on learning to see if their magnitudes are the same or different. Usually, simple classifications rather than complicated, detailed ones serve to summarize the findings. These relatively simple findings suggest educational procedures that are convenient and practical to implement.

Generalizability means that studies should yield similar results in national and international samples of students of different characteristics, such as sex and age; in different subjects, such as civics and science; and using different research methods, such as surveys, case studies, and experiments (Walberg, 1986). For example, the effects of mastery learning on different students and in different school subjects and grade levels may be estimated to determine the extent of their generality.

What has been empirically found in hundreds of studies is that generally the results are surprisingly robust. The more powerful factors appear to benefit all students in all conditions, but some students appear to benefit somewhat more than others under some conditions. In addition, some studies report larger effects than the averages given below; others, of course, report smaller effects than the averages. The cited research should be consulted for details.

OTHER RESEARCH

Since our concern was productivity, we hoped that our own research would efficiently capitalize on previous inquiry. With the support of the National Institute of Education and the National Science Foundation, our team of investigators started by compiling reviews of the 1970s on the productive factors in learning. Next, quantitative syntheses of all available studies of productive factors were conducted; syntheses of several thousand investigations were compiled and are summarized below (see Walberg, 1986, for a more detailed account). Case studies of Japanese and United States classes were carried out to compare educational productivity in the two countries. The productive factors were further probed for their significance in promoting learning in three large sets of statistical data on elementary- and high-school students—the National Assessment of Educational Progress, *High School and Beyond,* and the International Study of Educational Achievement (Walberg, 1986; Walberg and Shanahan, 1983; and Walberg, Harnisch, and Tsai, 1986). Finally, large-scale studies were made of the most effective ways of assisting educators to bring about constructive changes in schools by holding workshops and by improving teaching climate and staffing.

RESULTS

Collectively the various studies suggest that the three groups of the previously defined nine factors are powerful and consistent in influencing learning. Syntheses of about 2,575 studies suggest that these generalizable factors are the chief influences on cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning. Many aspects of these factors can be altered or influenced by educators.

The first five essential factors appear to substitute, compensate, or trade off for one another at diminishing rates of return. Immense quantities of time, for example, may be required for a moderate amount of learning if motivation, ability, or instructional quality is minimal. Thus no single essential factor overwhelms the others. All appear important.

SPECIAL EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION

The studies show that particular educational methods are powerful and consistent in influencing learning. Quantitative syntheses of these studies show that some methods are far more effective than others that are common in schools today, and yet they are not necessarily more costly (Walberg and Fowler, 1987). Several of these serve as the basis for the discussion of efficiency, trade-offs, and constraints in this section.

LARGE INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTS

Among the systematic methods analyzed, the psychological components of mastery learning rank very high in their effects on educational outcomes. Skinnerian reinforcement and acknowledgment of correct performance have the largest overall average effect. Other features of mastery learning—appropriate instructional cues, continuous engagement of students in lessons, and corrective feedback in cases of student errors—also have very large effects.

What trade-offs or constraints would explain why mastery learning is not more prevalent? One may be that it requires thorough and systematic analysis of curriculum into units of content, as well as frequent diagnosis of student performance. Another is that it requires departures from conventional teaching. If the truth is told by tests, moreover, it is obvious that some students already know the material and would require no time, while others may require painful, discouraging amounts of study to attain mastery. Such a classroom state of affairs might be difficult to handle over a long term.

Acceleration programs, ranked second in effect, provide college-level lessons and other advanced activities to elementary- and high-school students with outstanding scores on difficult selection tests. Students in these programs gain much more than do those in comparable control groups. There seems little doubt that selective admission and acceleration did much for the elite students of the Art Institute of Chicago, Bronx High School of Science, City College of New York, Boston Latin School, and The Juilliard School.

Lack of widespread acceleration programs today may be partly explained by the unwillingness of society to face large differences in student talents or by the preference for equality of results over equality of opportunity. In addition, it can be argued that bright specialists may benefit heterogeneous groups by sparking students' interest in advanced work, just as the specialists themselves may have something to gain from the students. These are obviously value judgments subject to controversy, and even the facts behind the presumed secondary consequences do not seem well established.

Reading training, ranked third in instructional impact, refers to programs that coach learners in adjusting reading speed and techniques to purposes such as skimming, comprehension, and finding answers to questions. The unusual learning criterion in assessing these programs is reader adaptability to purpose and material. Probably more teachers would employ such training techniques if they knew of their effectiveness and if they were trained to do so.

OTHER LARGE INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTS

Several other instructional programs and methods have large and consistent effects. These include cooperative team learning, in which some autonomy over the means and pace of learning is delegated to students, who form small groups to help each other. This method probably gains efficiency by allowing more discussion and mutual help within the small group than is possible in whole-class recitations. An extra benefit is that students may acquire social skills in working together as a team in competition with other teams. Teachers may avoid using this method because they have not been trained to use it and because it may require more planning than ordinary teaching.

Personalized and adaptive instruction, tutoring, and diagnostic-prescriptive methods also have strong effects. Personalized learning, sometimes called "the Keller Plan," is similar to mastery learning in that most lectures and recitations are eliminated and each student is guided by entry tests and written lessons plus individual help. Adaptive instruction uses similar techniques plus work in small groups and differentiated staffing to increase learning. Tutoring and lesson prescriptions based on diagnosed individual needs are similar ways to adapt instruction to learners rather than batch-processing them. These methods may gain their success from helping students to concentrate on the specific goals they individually need to achieve or to gain independence from pervasive classroom seatwork and recitation in groups that may suit only the middle third of the students.

Even though these methods have been well demonstrated in classroom research, they are not widespread in practice. As in the case of other scientific discoveries, it may take considerable time for superior techniques to become popular in practice, especially when they require extra preparation and uncompensated entrepreneurial work on the part of practitioners.

MODERATE INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTS

Although educators may have forgotten the post-Sputnik science and mathematics curricula that were created in the decade after 1957, several syntheses of their evaluations show that these curricula had moderate effects on learning. They had strong comparative effects on modernized content, and students were also able to master traditional content. The use of the innovative curricula declined, however, for many reasons, including educators' interpretation of public demands for rigor as demanding elementary "back to basics" and more traditional content and methods (Walberg, 1983). In addition, it seems likely that the "new math" and "new science" are more cognitively demanding than the older methods, and there are shortages of qualified teachers in these areas.

In the last decade, school districts have purchased substantial amounts of miscellaneous hardware and software for computer-aided instruction, much of which may not be very effective for increasing learning. Much of the research on its effects has concerned unimaginative drill-and-practice or "page-turning" programs, but the assessed effects of computer-assisted instruction appear to be moderately better on average than those of traditional instruction. Because newer programs and those now being developed adapt to learner interests and abilities, they are likely to show larger effects (Walberg, 1983). Even so, union pressures may keep new monies flowing into the 80 percent or so of school budgets that goes into salaries.

EFFECTS OF QUANTITY OF INSTRUCTION, CURRICULUM, AND CONTENT

Students learn what they do while learning—a tautology, to be sure, but one that makes an often-forgotten point. French children, for example, learn to speak French as a consequence of exposure to spoken French and practice with their families and other social groups. American children, however, rarely master French because their exposure or language environment, even in a few years of formal courses, is limited in time and in the demanding standards of the real world. For this reason, most American children would score as mentally retarded on standard French intelligence tests and highly deficient on achievement tests. The important point is that exposure to content, in formal courses or in natural social settings, determines the substance of what is learned. It is a point to which even educators have given short shrift and that is obfuscated by an oddity about education in the United States in comparison to that in most other countries.

By international standards, public education in the United States (and in a few other countries, such as Australia, Canada, and the Federal Republic of Germany) is unusual in having no ministry of education. The Constitution makes no mention of education, thus leaving it to the states, which in turn leave varying degrees of discretion in standards and curricula to local school districts. Indeed, by delegation, default, or incapacity to monitor classrooms, considerable discretion is left to principals and teachers. Although tradition and grass-roots control favor a diversified system, it may have inefficiencies. Differing curricula mean children in a mobile society may skip vital concepts that are taught at different times in different schools or encounter difficulties in transferring old ways of learning to new settings.

Although the content problem remains widely unrecognized, the evidence for its existence is massive and compelling. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) first showed compellingly the powerful effects of content exposure on learning. Although such exposure may not vary much within countries, especially those with strong central ministries of education, such as France and Japan, it varies widely across countries. The IEA group measured such exposure in various ways, such as number of courses, hours of lessons during the year, standards, and test items covered in classes.

These exposure indexes were among the strongest and most consistent correlates of learning within and across countries. Even controlled for other productivity factors, such indexes typically yielded significant weights in multiple regressions; and such results were demonstrated in civics, English and French as foreign languages, literature, mathematics, reading comprehension, and science (Walberg, 1986).

U.S. STUDIES

Within the United States, evaluations of the updated mathematics and science courses (generated by educational and political furor over Sputnik in the 1960s) also showed powerful curriculum effects during the 1970s. The quantitative results of two syntheses showed that students in the new courses averaged better on tests reflecting the new content. The new courses may have also been more pedagogically efficient than the old, since students in them more often did better on neutral tests according to the categorization of tests in one review and, not very infrequently, worse on tests reflecting traditional content.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), given every few years to elementary- and secondary-school students in the United States, offers further evidence of the powerful effects of content exposure. Although the effects emerge in regression analyses of data at all age levels in reading, social studies, and science (Walberg, 1986), they can be most clearly seen in high-school mathematics (Horn and Walberg, 1984), since there is reasonable consensus about the subject matter (for example, trigonometry in contrast to history or literature). On the NAEP mathematics test for seventeen-year-olds, for example, the scores correlated .63 with the rated rigor of the highest course taken (ranging from consumer mathematics to calculus) and .62 with the number of mathematics courses completed. These correlations probably come close to the upper limit that might be indicated by exposure measures within the ordinary range of variation.

The regression weights for these curriculum exposure indexes were highly significant when controlled for socioeconomic status and most of the psychological productivity factors. But it cannot be inferred, of course, that educators can massively raise achievement by simply mandating higher standards and required courses. Teachers and students may lack the ability and motivation for foreign languages, physics, higher mathematics, and other demanding courses. By themselves, higher standards might mean higher dropout rates; low standards, however, debase high-school diplomas. Higher standards and rigorous content are likely to work best when the amount of time, homework, the amount and quality of instruction, classroom morale, and parental involvement are simultaneously expanded.

In any case, because of local control in the United States, children are exposed to widely varying amounts and standards of subject matter. Research on schools and classes often shows small effects because the teachers devote class time to topics omitted from criterion tests. Test performance depends in substantial part on the arbitrary overlap of the content of the test items and two variables—in the short term, the content of the lessons, or, over longer periods, the number and quality of courses in the subject taken by students.

STATE POLICIES

For these reasons, three efficiencies seem possible in principle. First, a national- or state-standardized, lock-step curriculum would maximize the achievement of students for which it was best targeted; and it would probably help other students to some extent. It would sacrifice, however, the tradition of local control and professional autonomy. If it were targeted on typical students, moreover, those of lower ability might fall increasingly behind, unless steps were taken to give them extra instruction (as in Japan, especially by families).

High-ability students might coast along to meet expectations and achieve less than they otherwise might.

A second possibility is the alignment of curricula, instruction, and tests so that these major components of education are efficiently concentrated on what is most important to learn. Minimum competency testing to ensure basic mastery also promotes such concentration. The cost of this policy is possible neglect of students of middle and high ability and equating a minimum with the higher standards that seem necessary in American schools.

A third possibility is to concentrate on the basic, fundamental, or most important subjects—perhaps English, foreign languages, mathematics, science, civics, history, geography, art, music, and physical education. Some educators, however, have argued that vocational courses are needed for employment, that life-style courses should be required to compensate for weaknesses in families and society, and that increased diversity and choice may motivate teachers and students. Fundamentalists have asked how such a diversified cafeteria or "shopping mall" approach can work if schools are doing poorly in the core subjects.

It might be difficult to achieve consensus on these questions of values. The costs and benefits are not the same for all who might have an interest in the decisions. Still, it is obvious that states are mandating courses and testing. Some efficiencies may ensue, although they may incur some explicit or implicit trade-offs.

HOMEWORK AND TELEVISION

Homework is a useful way to increase instructional time. Homework that is graded or commented upon has roughly three times the effect of socioeconomic status.[4] By comparison, homework that is merely assigned has an effect comparable to socioeconomic status.

In addition, more than about ten hours per week of leisure-time television viewing, perhaps because it displaces more educationally constructive home activities, has a weak deleterious influence on school learning. Yet high-school students report watching, on average, twenty-eight hours of television per week and doing only four or five hours of homework (Walberg and Shanahan, 1983). This is not to dismiss television completely. Educationally constructive programs such as *Sesame Street, Nova,* and the news, along with critical parent-child discussions of them, are likely to help.

OTHER WAYS OF EXTENDING TIME

Instructional time or curriculum exposure is a general concept. It can and is being extended in a variety of specific ways. Our formerly agrarian nation may have historically required a long summer vacation so that children could help in the fields, but today summer school would be a great advantage to all children, especially those diagnosed as at risk. Preschools and half-day and full-day kindergartens are being implemented in many states. Some districts are extending the time in school from midafternoon through the evening hours. The extra time spent is partly recreational and partly academic with adult supervision.

HOME ENVIRONMENT

School-parent programs to improve academic conditions in the home have an outstanding record of success in promoting achievement. What might be called "the curriculum of the home" is twice as predictive of academic learning as is family socioeconomic status. This curriculum refers to informed parent-child conversations about everyday events, encouragement and discussion of leisure reading, monitoring and joint analysis of television viewing and peer activities, deferral of immediate gratifications to accomplish long-term goals, expressions of affection and interest in the child's academic and other progress as a person, and perhaps, among such unremitting efforts, occasional doses of caprice and serendipity.

Moreover, deliberate, cooperative efforts by parents and educators to modify academic conditions in the home have an outstanding record of success in promoting achievement. In twenty-nine controlled studies of the past decade, 91 percent of the comparisons favored children in such programs over nonparticipant groups. Although the average effect was twice that of socioeconomic status, some programs had effects ten times as large. Since few of the programs lasted more than a semester, it seems that the potential for programs sustained over the years of schooling is great, since the programs appear to benefit older as well as younger students (see review by Walberg, 1984).

HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Operation Higher Achievement, led by then District 9 Superintendent Albert Briggs at the Grant School in Chicago's very depressed Near Westside, illustrates what can be done in inner-city public schools by means of well-organized and sustained partnership efforts. A joint school staff-parent steering committee at Grant initially formulated seven program goals such as "increasing parents' awareness of the reading process" and "improving parent-school-community relations." Seven ten-member staff-parent committees were appointed and met periodically during the summer and school year to plan and guide the accomplishment of each goal. The goals were based in part on a survey of parents that indicated that they desired closer school-parent cooperation, stricter school discipline, and more educational activities conducted in the community for their children.

The committees wrote staff-parent-child contracts to be followed during the school year. Superintendent Briggs, the principal, and teachers signed contracts on educational services to be provided to each child. The parents pledged such things as providing a quiet, well-lit place for study each day; informing themselves about and encouraging the child's progress; and cooperating with teachers on matters of schoolwork, discipline, and attendance. The children also signed improvement pledges.

Small-business merchants in the community raised funds to provide book exchange fairs and other school activities. Evaluation of this program, along with other research, shows that inner-city children can make middle-class progress in achievement if educators work cooperatively with parents on joint goals (Walberg, 1984).

Although parent-teacher-targeted interventions on specific achievement goals show the greatest effects on learning, David Williams and others at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in Austin, Texas, described other constructive roles for parents in school programs. These roles include the following: audience for the child's work; home tutor; co-learner with the child; school-program supporter; advocate before school boards and other officials; committee member; and paid school staff worker. Although parents view their participation in some of these roles more favorably than do teachers and principals, all parties agree that there should be more parent involvement than presently exists. The nation, moreover, can ill afford to let any prospectively more productive agent remain a silent partner in solving the problems of at-risk youth.

STATE IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

Except for home-school partnerships, the discussion above has only touched briefly and occasionally on questions of context, implementation, and constraints. A vast literature is available on the implementation of specific techniques and programs. For example, the *Handbook of Research on Teaching* runs to 1,037 double-column pages of small type; and several books describe the theory, practice, and implementation of cooperative learning alone (Walberg, 1986). Although this final section is not an attempt to summarize implementation of specific programs, it discusses several generic strategies of implementing reforms of curriculum and instruction, especially from a state viewpoint.

If superior programs have been reasonably well identified, it might be hoped that educators would hasten to implement them widely and faithfully. Educators, however, may not be knowledgeable about which methods work best. If so, then publications, workshops, and training are in order. The immense popularity of the U.S. Department of Education's *What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning* (1986), which has apparently been sent to or reproduced for 1.3 million educators and parents, does in fact indicate a craving for sound information in plain language (with references to underlying research). Workshops and training, led by states or districts, may also be necessary, but they are sometimes unpopular among administrators and teachers.

Who, moreover, should decide which programs to choose and how to implement them? In fact, business leaders, governors, legislators, and state boards of education seem to have taken the initiative during the past several years. Does this curb initiative on the part of local boards and central office staffs? Should there be more "school-site management"? Should teachers have a voice? How about parents and students? These are hard questions, and I have no well-founded answers. A blending or balance of interests would seem reasonable, but does it lead to the complication of "too many cooks"?

Today one extreme seems fairly prevalent—the "top-down" fiat of legislative or state board mandates. Does it work? In the sense of getting programs in place and getting changes made, it probably does. Have the right programs been chosen, and have they worked well? I do not think we know, but officials in top-down states ought to be carefully evaluating the effects of the variety of policies they have implemented in recent years, especially with respect to the degree of program implementation and effects on learning.

A gentler alternative to the top-down policies would allow for greater diversity and autonomy of response within a framework of state priorities. One way to accomplish this is state "requests for proposals" to local districts for full or cost-sharing grants to enable them to compete for grants to study research literature, assess their needs for at-risk and other students, plan programs, and implement and evaluate them. A radical departure from the past would require experiments, with randomly assigned experimental and control groups, to get a good picture of real program effects. Although many such "true" experiments have been conducted successfully in medicine, agriculture, and on a small scale in classroom research, large-scale studies are relatively rare at the state and national levels. Many billions of educational dollars are spent without knowing their real effects on outcomes.

One problem with monetary incentives to implement programs is that the better districts, those with staff that know how to write grant proposals or that are already successful, would benefit still more by open competition. Although grants could be restricted to very poorly achieving districts, such a restriction would tend to reward incompetence. (In cases of truly incompetent, hopeless, and possibly corrupt districts, New Jersey and other states propose to declare bankruptcy and take over—a bold idea that bears watching and possibly extensive trials.)

In another implementation strategy, states could define achievement objectives, as many already have, and allow district autonomy of educational means. The states could then compare districts (possibly adjusting for the previous year's scores or student demographics). Those that gain more than expected might be given recognition or monetary incentives. Gains might be defined as averages or medians. States that desire equality of results (rather than equality of opportunity alone) could calculate the percentages of students attaining minimum standards or weigh at-risk students more heavily. (Those who value equal results most could calculate ratios of lowest- to highest-scoring students, but districts could then score well by preventing their best students from learning.)

Achievement incentives are subject to other distortions and even corruption, and they may have unsuspected second-order effects. Districts may teach to the test (which may be good), but they may also teach the actual test content—which would reward malfeasance. Technical means, such as item banking, test security, and spot testing, can prevent those problems, but they may produce a feeling of district resentment of states for imposition and auditing. State officials, on the other hand, need to exercise stewardship over the use of public funds or carry out legislative mandates—a tough dilemma, in my opinion, with no easy answers.

Finally, states (and local districts) might relinquish to schools considerable control perhaps nearly all control (yet still require certain curriculum features and tests, prescribe safety regulations, proscribe practices thought to be undesirable, constrain demographic composition, and the like). According to some theories, the greater the degree of delegation, the greater the professional autonomy, satisfaction, and effectiveness. Schools might get a fixed amount of money for each student attracted, possibly more for at-risk students. They would then have to compete in a quasi market for students and corresponding allotment of funds, and they would be directly accountable to parents within a framework of state and district constraints. Presumably, good schools and teachers would prosper; and poor schools, with inefficient or unattractive practices, would close.

Entrepreneurial people, however, might be difficult to attract, unless many federal, state, and district regulations were to be removed. Also, some believe that parents of at-risk children, even though they vote and pay taxes, could not wisely choose schools. But in one sense, they choose their schools now insofar as they choose where to live, and denying their capacity to choose more widely may be handicapping in itself.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

This discussion focuses mainly on specific psychological and instructional techniques for directly improving learning within classes and homes, and how states may encourage such techniques. But it is worthwhile to mention the likely value of initiatives carried out at intermediate levels, that is, in school and local districts (see also other chapters in this volume). Such initiatives may remove constraints, marshal energies, and provide incentives for curriculum, instruction, and other changes. A variety of such programs for at-risk students are described in the recent U.S. Department of Education's *Schools That Work: Educating Disadvantaged Children* (1987b). The quotations from *Schools That Work* in Table 2 on page 192 describe the common characteristics of successful programs.

STATE PROSPECTS

It seems something of an accomplishment that several thousand educational researchers have made available a host of important findings about what

Table 2
Quotations from *Schools That Work*

Schools

1. Mobilize students, staff, and parents around a vision of a school in which all students can achieve.
2. Create an orderly and safe school environment by setting high standards for discipline and attendance.
3. Help students acquire the habits and attitudes necessary for progress in school and in later life.
4. Provide a challenging academic curriculum.
5. Tailor instructional strategies to the needs of disadvantaged children.
6. Help students with limited English proficiency become proficient and comfortable in the English language—speaking, reading, and writing—as soon as possible.
7. Focus early-childhood programs on disadvantaged children to increase their chances for success.
8. Reach out to help parents take part in educating their children.

Parents, Guardians, and Communities

9. Instill in children the values they need to progress in school and throughout life.
10. Demand the best from children, and show this concern by supervising children's progress.
11. Get involved with the schools and with children's education outside school.
12. Invest in the education and future success of disadvantaged children.

Local, State, and Federal Governments

13. Ensure that education reforms make a difference for disadvantaged students.
14. Give local school officials sufficient authority to act quickly, decisively, and creatively to improve schools; and hold them accountable for results.
15. Assess the results of school practices, paying special attention to the impact of reform on disadvantaged students.
16. Support improved education through supplementary and compensatory programs, leadership, and research.

programs work best for students in general and for at-risk students in particular. Disseminating the research findings about the most productive programs can do considerable good.

It is unclear to me what else states might best do. The policy options for encouraging implementation, described in the last section, range from prevalent top-down state fiats to decentralized school-site decision-making about both the goals and the means of education. They all seem to have some good points and some bad points, and we may have insufficient research and insight to say which would be most advisable.

Perhaps we can, however, ask, What is likely to happen? Prediction is difficult, said a wise person, especially if it involves the future—but the reform movement probably will continue throughout the nation. More attention will be paid to problems of at-risk students (as exemplified by this book). Presidential candidates, legislators, and governors will retain a keen interest in education and demand better results. Testing will increase and comparisons will become more interesting. More variably, some states will set forth requirements for curriculum and time on various subjects; some will expand the school day and the number of school days per year; some will institute more kindergarten and preschool programs and summer school; some will prescribe homework.

The keen interest in achievement and in education research is likely to lead some states to require effective instructional methods and parent-involvement programs. Some states, while initiating such constructive changes, may remove needless and harmful regulations. These changes are likely to benefit students in general and at-risk students in particular.

Since opinions vary considerably about how much control states ought to retain and how they might best encourage constructive reform, states are likely to vary in what they do. While the common approaches of information dissemination, training, and testing are likely to continue, more radical changes—bankruptcies, achievement incentives, quasi-market competition, and even more detailed regulation—are likely to be tried in some states. If these changes are carefully studied with respect to how they affect achievement, particularly that of at-risk students, we will be in a better position to recommend broad implementation strategies rather than indicate the specific programs that work best, although the latter is hardly a small accomplishment.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Mathematics and, to a lesser extent, science are the most internationally comparable subjects. The content of other subjects, such as civics, history, and foreign languages, is less well defined and uniform across countries.

[2] Japanese rates of youth suicide in 1984 were about half the United States rates and had been declining as United States rates had been rising in the previous decade (U.S. Department of Education, 1987a, 89).

[3] excepting such physical or physiological classifications as deafness, blindness, and orthopedic handicaps

[4] That is a one-standard-deviation rise in socioeconomic status.

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SUCCESSFUL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS

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Many educators are able to teach at-risk students so that the overwhelming majority of those students are able to master a regular academic curriculum. Herbert Walberg's paper summarizes much of the effective-schools/effective-teaching literature. However, I would like to cite several examples of effective instruction with at-risk students.

> *Ball-Stick-Bird* (Fuller, 1977). This is a reading program that I and many other educators have used. Children and adults, including "retarded" and "learning-disabled," actually learn to read a simple sentence in the first twenty minutes of instruction, even before the full alphabet and phonics system are learned!
>
> *Marcus Garvey School*. Several years ago this private school, which serves mostly low-income African Americans in a low-income Los Angeles neighborhood, challenged a magnet school for the gifted in the Los Angeles City Schools. The third-grade class at Garvey defeated the sixth-grade class at the school for gifted children on a basic skills test! When the Garvey school first started operations, none of its teachers had a college degree.
>
> *Project SEED*. Nearly twenty years ago a high-school teacher in the Berkeley, California, public schools became alarmed at the rate of failure of so many minority children. He decided to start a program to improve the self-image of these children. He reasoned that the shortest route to that goal was to teach the most prestigious academic subject (mathematics, not arithmetic) at a relatively advanced level to the low-performing students. Elementary-grade students who could solve equations with unknowns and understand exponentiation logarithms and other mathematical operations developed a more favorable image of themselves, especially since this subject and topics are normally offered during high school or during the first year of college. Project SEED has now been demonstrated all over the United States and in foreign countries. It has been demonstrated to state legislatures and even to the Congress. At least one public school system, Dallas, has

> tried it on a broad basis over several years. Though costly to operate because of the use of outside teachers from private industry, the pedagogy is appropriate for any teacher. Oddly enough, it is virtually unknown in teacher-education institutions.
>
> *Dunbar Elementary School* is a public school in one of Atlanta's lowest-income areas. Over the past decade, Dunbar students have ranked near the top of the distribution of school averages on basic skills tests. Dunbar has not followed any special "canned" program nor used any gimmicks or special equipment. The principal, Ms. Marjorie Gosier, says that she merely leads the faculty in its role as a professional problem-solving team.
>
> *Dynamic Assessment and Instrumental Enrichment*. Dr. Reuven Feuerstein (1979), a student of Jean Piaget and Andre Rey, was charged by the government of Israel to create a solution to a national problem. Many immigrants to Israel had not been exposed to Western systems of formal schooling. Dr. Feuerstein created an approach to overcome the deficiencies in cognitive functioning that he concluded were caused by the absence of exposure to the type of thinking required in schools. Through the use of this approach, many low-performing students have been transformed dramatically. Many students now in special-education classes are fully capable of functioning effectively in regular academic classes with confidence, if provided with Feuerstein's sophisticated diagnostic and mediation program. (Note: Many low-performing students have never been exposed to appropriate mediation in the form of teaching. Therefore, we do not remediate what was never mediated in the first place.)
>
> *Adult Literacy*. Paulo Freire (1973) taught adults in poverty who were illiterate to read well enough to read their daily newspaper with about thirty hours of instruction! Freire is finally being recognized in the United States for his liberation pedagogy, a pedagogy that uses reading as a vehicle for teaching critical thought and critical consciousness to adults who seemed to have given up and joined the "culture of silence."

Many more examples could be cited. It is not my intention to urge the adoption of any of these particular programs, although I am highly impressed with all of them. I cite these examples merely to show that many people are already successful in teaching at-risk students. I also want to use these examples to make a few points about pedagogy. Among other things, these few examples teach us that

1. At-risk students can be taught successfully to perform at demanding academic levels.
2. Dramatic positive changes in the academic achievement of at-risk students are possible within a short period of time.

3. There is no one way to achieve success with at-risk students. Some of the examples cited above were of formal programs. Some involved specialized materials. Others, such as Project SEED, Dunbar Elementary, and Freire's work, involved no specialized materials or formal programs. Success was possible within public or private school settings.
4. We know how to help at-risk students now!
5. There are no absolute critical periods with human beings. It is never too late to learn.
6. At-risk students thrive on intellectual challenge, not on low-level remedial work. The successful approaches do not imitate the procedures for pigeon training. Abstract, conceptually oriented critical thought stimulates low-performing students.
7. There is no special pedagogy for at-risk students. The pedagogy that works for them is good for all students. Further, at-risk students fail to achieve because appropriate regular pedagogy has not been provided to them.
8. There are not natural racial or ethnic barriers to teaching success. The examples that I have cited above involve every conceivable combination of teachers and students by race and ethnicity. The real issue is teacher competency and will.
9. No new research is needed. We have hundreds of examples of good teaching in action. We need to spread the word. This is not to minimize the key role that research will play in education. I merely want to emphasize that at-risk students do not have to wait until some magical mystery solution is invented. They can be helped with what is now known!
10. It is interesting to me that most of these approaches apparently are not well-known to teacher educators, even in the cities where programs are headquartered and in some cases have been located for nearly two decades. Moreover, many teacher-education institutions seem not to be aware of many, if any, locations where teachers are successful with at-risk students.
11. In all of the cases I cited, the schools or teachers achieved the results alone. No large-scale mobilization of parents was required. The basic demographics of the communities were unchanged. None of the negative forces often cited to explain the failure of instruction operated to derail these teachers. Naturally, we want poverty to be eliminated. Naturally, we want children to be with both parents and to be well nourished. However, in the absence of these things, good teaching can still produce success in learning.

In short, the evidence is overwhelming. Teaching is a potent force. The real problem is to manage the politics so that good teaching can be provided for all students.

Many years ago, the late Ronald Edmonds, whom many consider the father of the effective-schools movement, made this statement: "We already know everything that we need to know in order to educate all of the children. Whether we do or do not, depends in the final analysis upon how we feel about the fact that we have not done so, so far." Edmonds and his associates developed a body of literature based on their research which showed that all children, regardless of race and socioeconomic status, were fully capable of achieving in the regular academic program of the school. Actually, the real meaning of Edmonds' research had less to do with the capabilities of children than with the capabilities of school people. Prior to the school-effectiveness movement, it was widely believed among professionals and others associated with the public school that school factors did not determine children's success in school. When children failed in school, explanations for their failure almost invariably concluded that the causal factors were family income, nutrition, cultural deprivation, and so forth. The idea that schools alone could change their practices so that children's achievement would rise significantly was almost a heresy.

Now researchers know what many good educators have known and said all along. These conclusions can be summed up as follows:

1. The vast majority of at-risk children are fully capable of succeeding in the academic program of the public schools.
2. At-risk children do not need anything special by way of pedagogy. In the overwhelming majority of the cases, the at-risk children fail because an appropriate quality of *regular instruction* is not made available to them.
3. Even under circumstances where at-risk children have fallen behind in their academic work, when given appropriate regular pedagogy, they can catch up with their age peers and, under certain circumstances, may even do better than average for their age group.

THE AT-RISK CONCEPT

If these things are true, what do we mean by "at-risk child"? For many people, the term indicates a student with certain specific mental deficiencies. Such a student is sometimes considered not simply to be deficient in achievement but also to be deficient in the basic capacity to achieve.

However, there is another way of thinking about what places the child at risk. A child, through no fault of his or her own, may be placed in a situation where *access* to an appropriate quality of regular instruction is restricted. For example, poverty and minority-group status are likely to place children at risk for the simple reason that both of those factors are often associated with the lack of distribution of high-quality services to children. Teacher turnover may be very high in low-income neighborhoods. Further, many professionals regard assignments to schools in more-affluent areas as most desirable; hence there is greater competition among able professionals for such assignments. Many teachers also try to avoid or resist being assigned to less-desirable schools. The net effect is that children do not have an equal opportunity to be exposed to the best teachers schools have to offer.

Consequently, the greatest risk poor and minority children may face is that which comes from our incorrect perception of the problem. Such a perception causes us to blame the child for what we have failed to provide and to search for solutions through an examination of children rather than systems.

THE IMPOTENCE OF REFORM

During the past decade, in spite of numerous school-reform reports and abundant school-effectiveness and teacher-effectiveness research, most efforts have failed to address meaningfully the problems of low-achieving students or students considered to be at risk. Many of the school reform reports are not equity-oriented at all. A few school-reform reports appear to be "excellence"-oriented. Some educators have suspected that the "excellence" terminology is sometimes used not as evidence of a concern for excellence at all, but as a code word to signal a retreat from the decade of "Great Society" equity efforts in education. Even if this is not the case, there is little or nothing in the school reform reports and effectiveness research in general that offers promise for the massive changes in education necessary to save the huge number of children in our systems who are at risk.

While school-effectiveness and teacher-effectiveness research have answered certain questions, they still leave other very important questions unanswered. For example, it is clear that schools can be turned around. They can produce academic achievement where it was not expected or predicted. However, virtually all of the school-effectiveness and teacher-effectiveness research suffers from the same general flaw. The researchers' criterion for success in almost all cases has been the achievement by students of *minimum competencies*, usually in "basic skills." Tests of basic skills are given to students before and after some type of instructional treatment or when comparing different types of educational settings.

What is missing from the research is a set of studies that use *maximum-competency* criteria. This is important, since once successful schools are identified using minimum-competency criteria, then various types of fine-grained analyses of school processes are undertaken. Participant observation, ethnography, or other forms of examination of school practices help to explain the successes that are seen. Based upon such analyses, general characteristics of effective schools have been identified. But as stated earlier, these are characteristics that describe schools that are effective in producing *minimum* rather than *maximum* competencies.

Some educators assume it takes the same type of professional effort to produce minimum competencies as it does to produce maximum competencies. My field experiences tell me this simply is not the case. Having observed many maximum-competency schools in operation, I have found many characteristics present in them that were not identified in the minimum-competency research. For example, many maximum-competency schools seem to rely upon high levels of academic preparation for the teaching staff; the development of a special ethos; a shared high-level academic mission among the faculty; and the extensive and appropriate use of well-conceived and well-planned field trips, outside speakers, and so forth. We need a great deal of research to determine if these and other variables typify the maximum-competency schools.

PROBLEMS WITH THE USE OF EFFECTIVE-SCHOOLS RESEARCH RESULTS

I also believe educators find great difficulty in putting the results of school-effectiveness research and the recommendations from the school-reform reports into practice, for a very simple reason. Committees, observers, and researchers usually participate in a data-rich environment. That is to say, when they observe live situations or when indirect observations are made close to the source, many things become apparent other than the specific things the researcher is interested in and will later report. Such additional things may actually be major factors influencing success.

However, reports of research usually are presented in summary form. For example, the whole body of school-effectiveness research has been summarized into checklists usually numbering a dozen or so items. While these checklists may indeed identify general critical characteristics of an effective minimum-competency school, it is difficult to use them, as some educators do, for direct planning of day-to-day professional activities. For example, if one characteristic of an effective school is that "the leader monitors closely the work of teachers and students," then we have a simple statement of what may in fact be a complex reality with many possibilities. There are an unlimited number of ways by which an educational leader may perform such monitoring. The particular ways that are chosen must be responsive to the personal styles, and characteristics of the people involved and to the context within which monitoring is to occur. It is very difficult to go from the general principle that monitoring should occur to particular requirements about the *way* that monitoring should occur.

The school-reform reports, the school-effectiveness reports, and the teacher-effectiveness reports can, should, and often do serve to stimulate the best in professional thinking and, hopefully, in practice as well. However, something more is needed if the benefits of these insights are to be made available to teachers and students.

MAKING SUCCESS WITH AT-RISK STUDENTS REAL

It is extremely important for educators to realize that live examples exist of what to do. I have found such examples in schools in almost every major city!

However, I have seen few examples that are districtwide. One of the most surprising things to me is that in district after district I have visited, local examples of success are not widely known among either the teaching staff of the district or among the administrative staff. Occasionally, outstanding local examples of success that are publicized in the popular media appear to be resented by some who do not know about the example from firsthand experience.

It is unlikely that school-district leadership can use existing local examples as universal models to be applied throughout an entire district. But what can be applied throughout the district is the identification of high-quality site leadership, which in turn would be allowed the flexibility to do what was necessary to produce an effective school, especially an effective school at the maximum-competency level. This does not mean that a laissez-faire school leadership situation should be established. Nor does it mean that examples of excellence cannot be useful for educators other than at a particular local school site. What we must remember is that while maximum-competency models may not be easily mass-produced, they can be used in other ways. The central administration can make it possible for school-site leaders to visit schools that are examples of success.

It has been my experience that there are far too few opportunities for such visitations to take place. As a result, many excellent examples of school leadership go unobserved by peers. For such examples to be useful, teachers and administrators must make frequent, in-depth visits and have opportunities for discussion among peers.

In the final analysis, there is no substitute for the professional judgment of the school-site leader, i.e., the principal, even while that leader must be accountable for results to central authority. The leadership functions of a principal cannot be standardized or made mechanical. The element of professional judgment must always be considered. However, this judgment can be influenced significantly by a broader awareness of school success with at-risk students. *Many principals have never seen a successful school that serves at-risk students.* Therefore, they have no models with which to work. Many such principals will actually hear about the reports of research on effective schools and on effective teaching. Most of them accept this research intellectually, but may not be able to internalize it at an operational level in the absence of opportunities to experience a concrete reality.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND AT-RISK STUDENTS

Many children are at risk because of the quality of the teacher-education process. Like public-school education, teacher education also has been undergoing reform. Many new proposals for teacher-education reform have been made. Among the most recent reform reports are the Carnegie Corporation and Holmes Group reports. However, these reports seem to contain many of the weaknesses of public-school reform reports. In the case of teacher education, changes are recommended with no data to show that those changes will mean better teaching as measured by better results in student academic achievement or other forms of achievement. If the basic "it," or standard content, of teacher education does not change, then making other changes will be like rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic*.

Every teacher education institution should be able to identify a pool of successful schools for at-risk students. Such successful schools can serve as examples and as laboratories for teacher training and administrative leadership training. I continue to be amazed that virtually all of the most powerful examples of successful teaching approaches for at-risk children I know about are infrequently used by faculty of the regular teacher-education programs in cities where they are located. For example, Project SEED is located in Berkeley, California, and is headquartered in Washington, D.C. It is a very successful teaching approach that has been used for almost two decades. It teaches high-level mathematical skills in algebra to elementary-school children from kindergarten through sixth grade. Yet, in spite of the success of this pedagogy, there has been little or no involvement of university teacher-education faculty in the observation, analysis, and utilization of Project SEED's strategies in teacher training. The same thing may be said of Dr. Feuerstein's model for working with low-performing children in special education, *The Dynamic Assessment of Retarded Performers* (diagnostic testing) and *Instrumental Enrichment* (remedial teaching). This failure to use successful approaches would be understandable if other effective or successful approaches to teaching at-risk students were well known and widely presented in teacher-education programs. However, this does not appear to be the case.

Above all, teacher-education programs must have *valid models* of service to at-risk children for demonstration purposes. Ideally, they should have many valid models.

WHY DO WE FAIL TO BE GUIDED BY KNOWN SUCCESS?

One may ask why, if the knowledge of how to be successful with at-risk children is available and if it has been available for a long period of time, such knowledge has not been transferred. I believe there are several reasons:

1. Many of the successful models are simply not studied at all. For example, many private schools are consistently successful in producing high levels of academic achievement for their students, including at-risk students. In fact, some of these private schools, such as the Marcus Garvey School in Los Angeles, were established for the exclusive purpose of educating at-risk students. Yet we have little or no research that would enable us to describe what is going on in such successful maximum-competency private school operations. Therefore, these schools' understanding of success cannot be transferred easily to other schools.
2. Many of the studies of effective instruction are not ethnographic studies. The research models that have been popular in education for decades are primarily statistical and static. The *process* of education itself is not studied

often enough through the most sensitive methodologies available for that purpose. Participant observation, ethnography, and other forms of anthropological observation are often better suited for studying school processes than are those which have been developed for psychological research. Shirley B. Heath's *Ways with Words* and Ray Rist's *The Urban School: A Factor for Failure* are examples of the types of revelations possible when appropriate methodologies are used.

3. Many studies miss the active principles in success even if they are ethnographic or participant-observation studies. This is dependent upon the degree of sophistication and insights of the researchers. For example, Dr. Barbara Sizemore's study of effective schools identifies several variables that have been missed by most school-effectiveness researchers (Sizemore, 1985, forthcoming). One of these variables is particularly interesting. Dr. Sizemore describes a general attitude of successful principals: "They have made a decision that they don't want to be superintendents." The statement captures the independent, single-minded, task-oriented, risk-taking streak that is present in many successful principals. For example, such principals would not accept the assignment of faculty to their school who they believed would not get the best work from children. As a result, many such administrators were frequently in trouble with the central office and were often seen as noncooperative.

   Another example of locating the active principle in success is found in the work of William Johntz in Project SEED. For Johntz the academic preparation of teachers in mathematics is critical. It is only when that preparation can be assured that the matter of pedagogy should be faced. Then the type of pedagogy becomes extremely important. In this situation, as in the case of Mortimer Adler with his *Padeia Proposal,* the foundation of the pedagogy should be the "Socratic" questioning method, a method that can be executed successfully only if the teacher has a broad and deep reservoir of content.

   The active principle in success, for Dr. Feuerstein, is that *mental structures* for poorly performing students must be changed. The goal of his system of Dynamic Assessment and Instrumental Enrichment is structural *cognitive modification,* or fundamental changes in the basic habits and patterns of information processing. In the case of Freire, the *use by the teacher of the student's prior knowledge* and the *awakening of the student* by the teacher to the student's own creative history as the foundation for critical dialogue are key principles. Still other educational leaders have pointed to the social environment surrounding the schools that can operate in support of the school. Community awareness of the school, community participation in the school, and especially school participation in the community all point to active but hidden ingredients in some schools' success.

4. Many studies waste time and resources with a focus on presumed environmental preconditions for learning rather than upon successful

instructional practices, regardless of the environment. Such studies deflect the attention of professionals to things that are not truly essential in the design of good teaching practices.

5. Many "projects" are funded for implementation without sufficient infrastructure to support the intervention. For example, the Detroit Public School System recently made a commitment to implement a program of Dynamic Assessment and Instrumental Enrichment. The superficial way to implement such a program would have been to provide minimal training for a small group of teachers and psychologists who were to receive Dynamic Assessment training and for the group of teachers who were to receive training in Instrumental Enrichment (remedial instruction). However, the Director of Special Education and her associates understood very quickly that much more would be needed to prevent those individuals who had learned new methodologies from being absorbed into a vast system, being isolated within the system, and operating without reinforcement. As a result, the Department of Special Education made special efforts to build a strong infrastructure within the school system so that the program would have the greatest chance of success. The building of that infrastructure included the following elements:
    a. Sufficient numbers of professionals were trained in order to have a critical mass within the district who "spoke the same language" and could serve to critique district efforts.
    b. Proceeding on the fact that many things learned are quickly forgotten if not reinforced, the school system provided extra depth in the professional training process. Efforts of all teachers were reinforced through extra in-depth training, numerous opportunities for professionals in the program to meet and review what they had been doing, and opportunities to plan for joint activities in the future. Many other steps were taken to build the infrastructure in support of Detroit's professionals. Those efforts appear to be paying off.

All of these factors together help explain why knowledge we have about how to succeed with at-risk students is not transferred into regular practice.

WHY WELL-INTENDED PUBLIC POLICY EFFORTS FAIL

Why does public policy seem to show such inconsistent or poor effects? Many educators and policymakers have succeeded in establishing rules and programs designed to help at-risk students. Yet many of these efforts have not borne the fruits their designers hoped for. There are many reasons for this failure, including the following reasons:

1. Often, with the best of intentions, policymakers actually mandate poor practice. For example, the Education of the Handicapped Act (Public Law

94-142) was designed primarily as an accountability system to guarantee due process and equal access for children to educational opportunity. As a part of that process of accountability, an *individual education program* (IEP) for children was required. This requirement has resulted in massive activity among educators all across the country. As I have observed, it has also been massively misunderstood. Many educators have tended to view the IEP as a pedagogical tool, whether or not they have faith in it as a tool, instead of as an accountability instrument. Yet, to my knowledge, there are no data to show that the use of IEPs results in greater gains for children in school.

2. Many public policy efforts maintain a "mission control" mentality. This means that the management of day-to-day instructional decision-making often tends to be centralized outside the school site. This is seen most clearly in the many reading programs in use in some school districts. The adoption of a basal series almost requires that all teachers approach the teaching of reading in exactly the same way, even on the same schedule. The poor results of such practice with at-risk students should suggest the need for extreme caution in mandating the day-by-day actions of teachers.
3. Policymakers are confronted with the decision of whether to use the "stick" or the "carrot" in putting requirements before teachers. I believe that the vast majority of teachers want desperately to succeed. They want to enjoy their work; they want to receive the feedback that comes from doing a job well. Most will take risks in order to improve their professional skills and to try new approaches that may succeed with children who are at risk. Categorically, the carrot is better than the stick in encouraging that participation.
4. Policymakers often legitimize false categories, leading ultimately to the instant institutionalization of poor practice. For example, I can think of little worse in school pedagogy today than the long-time use of the categories "educable mentally retarded" and "learning-disabled." Especially for the category "learning-disabled," there is no professionally agreed-upon definition whatsoever. We do not know what it is; we do not know how it works, or if it does. And there certainly are no specialized pedagogies that are successful in dealing with learning disability. Yet, when policymakers fund and require teacher certification and child labeling and placement in such categories, or require educators to use such categories in the design of instruction, they reinforce invalid pedagogy to the detriment of at-risk children. Funding in such categories should be provided only when it is clear that *children benefit* from the practices associated with the category.
5. Finally, policymakers who attempt to ensure an adequate quality of performance for children at risk often use paper-and-pencil criteria rather than performance criteria when determining teacher competency. For

example, legislative requirements that teachers pass paper-and-pencil exams for admission to teacher education, for exit from teacher education, and for licensing ignore the fact that there is no guarantee that high scorers on such exams will be good teachers. At the same time, no data exist to show whether those who are excluded from teaching because of low scores on paper-and-pencil exams are poor teachers.

Taken together, these represent the types of public-policy decisions that may have an effect exactly the opposite of that intended.

MAKING PUBLIC POLICY FOR SUCCESS WITH AT-RISK STUDENTS

How can public policy change the outcome for children at risk? In view of the fact that public-policy actions can exacerbate the risks some children face, it is even more important for policymakers to realize the possibility and high desirability of appropriate use of public policy as an instrument for reducing the risks for at-risk children. With risk reduction as the goal, the following activities by policymakers should be considered.

1. At-risk children can be helped by public policies that support valid inservice training for the present teaching staff to improve both teaching methods and academic grounding in content. In the case of pedagogical training, public policy should support only such training as can be clearly demonstrated to improve teaching practices (as measured by positive changes in student performance).
2. In view of the fact that many successful approaches to serving at-risk children appear to be performed under isolated conditions, it is important that a massive effort to provide for the videotaped documentation of successful practice in natural school environments be supported. Such videotaped documentation can, over time, be carefully edited in order to illustrate in real terms that teachers can be successful with at-risk students and to show what it is about teaching that produces student learning. Many of the present audio-visual materials on teaching methodology are not done in live classrooms. They are contrived and in no way represent a realistic portrayal of what actually takes place in schools. Such videotaped documentation would be a major effort, one which has yet to be done on the scale necessary.
3. Public policymakers can require content equity in the educational program of the school. The school curriculum must be desegregated. All vestiges of racism, sexism, or any other kind of "ism" must be removed. But more than that, it is important to reconstruct the whole story of the *human* experience as it applies to every content area of the curriculum. A good example of how this can be achieved is the Portland (Oregon) Public Schools Multiethnic Curriculum Project. It is a project in which outstanding international

experts (with appropriate multiethnic backgrounds) in five academic disciplines, working with diverse ethnic community groups, completed a massive multiethnic curriculum change. The content areas were science, mathematics, language arts, art and music, and social science.

4. Policymakers can improve the educational environment for at-risk children by insisting that psychological assessments have instructional validity. "Instructional validity" means that the use of psychological assessment must be shown in the long run to be beneficial to children. Nothing is worse for at-risk children than to subject them to seemingly scientific assessment practices that do not have the ultimate result of contributing positively to their academic achievement. When a child is assessed and continues to perform below par, the impression is given that his or her low performance has been scientifically validated.
5. Policymakers can make a major contribution to the education of at-risk children by supporting the identification of local demonstration sites that are successful in the education of at-risk children. These sites could then be made available for professional visitation and their use encouraged. In addition to locating live-demonstration sites, policymakers should support research to document and validate the professional practices that are observed. Policymakers should reward success through its systematic study and its representation to the broader professional community.
6. Policymakers should insist on true reform of teacher education—reform that focuses on the clinical program for the training of teachers. In order to do this, the education program must be staffed by clinical professors who are able to demonstrate to teacher-education candidates the pedagogical strategies they represent, especially those strategies effective with at-risk students.
7. Policymakers can improve the educational environment for at-risk children by supporting an expanded co-curricula program for the schools. More than all other children, at-risk students need a broader exposure to the wider community in order to provide information and socialization opportunities most of them do not have. Over the past few decades, some schools have de-emphasized the co-curricula program in an attempt to focus more on the "basics." This should not be an "either/or" proposition but a "both/and" one, especially where at-risk children are concerned.
8. Finally, policymakers should set maximum-competency standards for all children and should then move to provide the services necessary for all children to reach maximum competency. To measure the effectiveness of schools by appeal to minimum-competency data is to institutionalize low expectations for children. The low expectations will be followed by low performance. On the other hand, reaching for the higher standards, if supported, can make a significant difference in the academic achievement of at-risk students.

CONCLUSION

Children are least at risk when we decide that their education is our highest priority. They are most at risk when we decide that the pedagogy required for them is complicated and beyond the reach of ordinary teachers. There are political problems that make it difficult for us to do what is best for our children. We must approach these as political rather than as pedagogical problems. All we need in order to solve the pedagogical problems is the will to do so. Certainly the efforts of the chief state school officers here and in further planned activities offer a bright ray of hope, perhaps the brightest in nearly a decade. If you [chief state school officers] are determined, we can win!

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RESOURCES

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ACCELERATING ELEMENTARY EDUCATION FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

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Schools today are faced with a major challenge in that almost one-third of the nation's elementary and secondary students are educationally disadvantaged. This proportion is rising as new waves of immigration, increasing poverty among families with children, and high birth rates augment the disadvantaged population (Levin, 1986). The failure to address the needs of these students will mean increased social and political turmoil, a less-competitive economy, higher costs of other social services, and a larger educational sector characterized by rising costs, lower quality, and greater conflict.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest some systematic actions that states might take in addressing the needs of the educationally disadvantaged. Particular attention will be devoted to their current status and the challenge that they present to the states. The paper will respond with the elements of a long-term solution that focuses on the elementary school as well as with a set of actions that the states can take to address the challenge.

STATUS OF THE EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED

For the purpose of this presentation, educationally disadvantaged pupils are defined as those students who lack the home resources and community resources to benefit fully from conventional schooling practices and from the recent wave of educational reforms. Because of poverty, cultural differences, or linguistic differences, they tend to have low academic achievement and to experience high secondary-school dropout rates. Such students are especially concentrated among minority groups, immigrants, non-English-speaking families, and economically disadvantaged populations.

Over the last two decades, some progress has been made in improving the education of the disadvantaged (Levin, 1986, pp. 8–9). For example, studies of academic achievement between minority and nonminority students and between students of low socioeconomic status and other students suggest that as much as one-quarter of the achievement gap that existed between these groups has been closed in the last twenty years. Nevertheless, we have reached a plateau in which most of the gap remains, and whatever progress has been made has not been adequate to bring disadvantaged students into the mainstream of educational life in America.

Typically, the disadvantaged child begins schooling with poorer achievement in those subjects that are valued by schools, and the achievement gap grows so that by secondary school such students are performing at two to three years below grade level on the average. This places such pupils at about the twentieth percentile in standard achievement, which relegates them to less-demanding courses and remedial work rather than a standard curriculum. High-school dropout rates for these students have been estimated at about 50 percent, resulting in an undereducated class of adults with respect to economic, political, and social opportunities (Levin, 1986).

Nor has the latest wave of reforms made a meaningful impact on the education of disadvantaged students. As meritorious as these reforms may be for other students, they do not address the specific needs of the disadvantaged. The reforms stress raising standards at the secondary level, without providing additional resources or new strategies to assist the disadvantaged in meeting these higher standards. Any strategy for improving the educational plight of the disadvantaged must begin at the elementary level and must be dedicated to preparing children for doing high-quality work in secondary school. Simply raising standards at the secondary level without making it possible for the disadvantaged to meet the new standards is more likely to lead to their dropping out.

Two of the most typical recent state reforms are the setting of minimum competency standards for a diploma and the raising of course requirements for graduation. Paradoxically, both of these may contribute to the dropping out of disadvantaged students who already have difficulty in meeting the old standards (McDill, Natriello, and Pallas, 1985). Unless the achievement gap can be substantially closed before students enter secondary school, the higher standards will serve to further discourage the disadvantaged rather than to improve their performance.

DIRE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

In the absence of substantial interventions, the rapidly increasing population of educationally disadvantaged students will ultimately emerge as a large and growing population of disadvantaged adults. The potential consequences of ignoring the needs of these students will affect not only the disadvantaged but the larger society as well (Levin, 1986, pp. 13–16). These consequences include 1) the emergence of a dual society with a large and poorly educated underclass; 2) massive disruption in higher education; 3) reduced economic competitiveness of the nation as well as those states and industries most heavily impacted by these populations; and 4) higher costs for public services that are a response to poverty.

1. *A Dual Society.* As the disadvantaged population increases without appropriate educational interventions to improve its situation substantially, this group is likely to form the underclass of a dual society. Composed of racial and ethnic minorities and persons from economically disadvantaged origins, the group will face high unemployment rates, low earnings, and menial occupations. At the same time the political power of the disadvantaged will increase as their numbers and potential votes rise. The specter of a dual society suggests great political conflict and potential social upheaval.

2. *Conflict in Higher Education.* The implications for higher education are also severe. Larger and larger numbers of educationally disadvantaged will mean that the public institutions of higher education will have to become more restrictive in their admissions criteria or more devoted to remedial academic work. Either direction is fraught with problems. Substantial remedial activities will require additional university resources, and students will take longer to complete their degrees. All of this means that costs to universities and students will spiral. The increase in remedial functions will alter the character of public higher education, with a tendency to water down the overall curriculum and reduce standards as pressures increase to approve the application of such courses to degree programs.

Alternatively, the universities may seek to restrict admissions through greater reliance on standardized test scores and more academic course requirements so that fewer persons from disadvantaged populations can participate in higher education. Even now a disproportionately small share of minority and educationally disadvantaged students are eligible to participate in public higher education because of their high rates of dropping out and poor academic records. But these disproportions will be exacerbated by creating an elite system for admissions, a result that flies in the face of the democratic mission conferred upon public systems of higher education supported by tax revenues collected from the entire population. At the same time that higher education would become more exclusive, those who were increasingly excluded would be expanding their political power at both the state and federal levels. Clearly, such a policy will lead to political and social turmoil, both on and off the campuses.

3. *Economic Deterioration.* A further consequence of the present treatment of the educationally disadvantaged will be a serious deterioration in the quality of the labor force. As long as the disadvantaged were just a small minority of the population, they could be absorbed into seasonal and low-skill jobs or relegated to unemployment without direct consequences for the overall economy. However, as their numbers grow and they continue to experience low achievement and high dropout rates, a larger and larger portion of the available labor force will be unprepared for available jobs. Here we refer not only to managerial, professional, and technical jobs, but to the huge and burgeoning numbers of lower-level service jobs that characterize the economy. Clerical workers, cashiers, and salespeople need basic skills in oral and written communications, computations, and reasoning that are not guaranteed to the educationally disadvantaged. A United States government study in 1976 found that while 13 percent of all seventeen-year-olds were classified as functionally illiterate, the percentages of illiterates among Hispanics and blacks were 56 and 44 percent respectively (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1976).

The United States is already facing great difficulties in maintaining a competitive economic stance relative to other industrialized and industrializing nations. As the disadvantaged become an increasing and even a dominant share of the labor force in some states and regions, their inadequate educational preparation will undermine the competitive position of the industries and states in which they work. Employers will suffer lagging productivity, higher training costs, and competitive disadvantages that will result in lost sales and profits. Federal, state, and local governments will suffer a declining tax base and loss of tax revenues.

4. *Rising Costs of Public Services.* The economic losses will come at a time when the cost of public services is rising for populations that are disadvantaged by inadequate education. More and more citizens will need to rely upon public assistance for survival, and increasing numbers of undereducated teens and adults will pursue illegal activities to fill idle time and obtain the income that is not available through legal pursuits.

The inability to find regular employment that pays sufficiently to overcome poverty will require greater public subsidies to overcome increases in poverty and to counter drugs, prostitution, theft, and other alternatives to legal employment. These developments will reduce the attractiveness of the United States as a place to live, while increasing the costs of police services and the criminal justice system as well as public assistance. Pressures will be placed on the middle class to pay higher taxes at the same time that their incomes are threatened by a flagging economy, creating an additional source of political conflict as besieged taxpayers resist tax increases.

STATE ACTIONS ON THE STATUS OF THE DISADVANTAGED

This section has reviewed the issue of who the educationally disadvantaged are as well as their lack of educational progress, the inappropriateness of present educational reforms for meeting their needs, and the consequences of inaction. Each of these areas has important implications for state action.

- States need to define clearly the criteria for considering children to be educationally disadvantaged and to make accurate estimates of their present and future numbers and distribution among school districts. This process should be informed by a standard definition of educationally disadvantaged students, possibly one that is established by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).
- States need to establish an assessment system that will continuously monitor the patterns of educational progress among these students, with specific

attention to differences among the various racial and ethnic subgroups. Indicators that are used in the assessment system should include achievement scores, dropout rates, attendance, teenage pregnancy, drug use, school violence and vandalism, and a wide range of other appropriate measures. Such an assessment approach should have the capability to delineate areas of both progress and continuing problems. The CCSSO might take the lead in suggesting categories for assessment and a uniform measurement approach.

- States need to examine the consequences of the increased number of educationally disadvantaged students for state higher education, social equality, economic productivity and employment, and the costs of public services. This information should be disseminated to the population at large as well as to the political constituencies that will be most affected and to those who can provide political leadership and support for a campaign to address the needs of the educationally disadvantaged.
- States need to explore their present strategies for addressing the educational needs of the disadvantaged and consider reforms and interventions that are more appropriate than the earlier wave of reforms of the eighties. We will explore these issues in more detail in the next section.

WHAT IS WRONG?

If disadvantaged students are unable to improve their educational standing through existing school programs, something is wrong with our present schooling interventions. Disadvantaged students begin their schooling with a learning gap in those areas valued by schools and mainstream economic and social institutions. The existing model of intervention assumes that they will not be able to maintain a normal instructional pace without prerequisite knowledge and learning skills. Thus such youngsters are placed in less-demanding instructional settings—either by pulling them out of their regular classrooms or by adapting the regular classroom to their needs—to provide remedial or compensatory educational services. This approach appears to be both rational and compassionate, but it has exactly the opposite consequences of those intended.

First, it stigmatizes them with a mark of inferiority and reduces learning expectations both for them and for their teachers. Such students are viewed as slow learners and treated accordingly, with negative consequences for student esteem and performance. Second, slow-paced instruction tends to place a heavy emphasis on endless repetition of material through drill and practice. The result is a school experience that lacks intrinsic vitality, omits crucial learning skills and reinforcement, and moves at a plodding pace. It is also joyless.

These two characteristics mean that the disadvantaged child gets further and further behind the educational mainstream the longer that he or she is in school. That is, the very model of remediation is one that must necessarily reduce educational progress and widen the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children.

The widening gap in achievement over the school experience would seem to run counter to the philosophy of compensatory or remedial programs. In theory, such programs were established to close the gap. But the fact of the matter is that schools do not focus on the gap per se. There is no time limit established for closing the achievement gap and bringing disadvantaged youngsters into the educational mainstream. Rather, the interventions tend to be procedural and mechanical, without clear goals.

Finally, most compensatory educational programs do not involve teachers and parents sufficiently or draw adequately upon available community resources. Parents are often viewed as "the problem" rather than being enlisted as a potentially positive influence for their children's learning. Professional staff at the school level are typically omitted from participating in the important educational decisions that they must ultimately implement. Such an omission means that teachers are expected to dedicate themselves to the implementation of programs which do not necessarily reflect their professional judgments, a condition that is not likely to spur great enthusiasm.

In contrast, effective programs must be based upon raising expectations and conferring higher status on the disadvantaged for the learning progress that they will make rather than on lowered expectations and stigmas. Programs must provide vivid examples, interesting applications, and challenging problems rather than emphasize repetitive learning through constant drill and practice. They must set explicit goals for bringing these students into the educational mainstream, and they must empower teachers and parents to address the specific needs of students. Most important, the approach should incorporate a comprehensive set of strategies that reinforce one another in creating an organizational push toward raising the achievement of students.

ACCELERATED SCHOOLS AS SOLUTIONS

Using these principles, we have designed an Accelerated School for transforming existing schools that have high concentrations of disadvantaged youngsters, a situation typically found in large cities and some rural areas. The Accelerated School is a transitional elementary school that is designed to bring disadvantaged children up to grade level by the completion of the sixth grade. The goal of the school is to enable disadvantaged students to benefit from mainstream secondary-school instruction by effectively closing the achievement gap in elementary school.

By bringing children into the educational mainstream, we mean more than bringing them up to grade level in basic skills that are measured by standardized tests. We are referring also to children's capabilities in problem solving and communications as well as to their educational aspirations and self-concept as learners. All of these need to be addressed, not just those dimensions measured on standardized tests. The approach is also designed to be a dropout-prevention program in that it will eliminate the most important single cause of dropping out—serious achievement deficits.

As reflected in the works of Comer (1980) and Goodlad (1984), the stress is on the elementary school as a whole rather than on a particular grade, curriculum, approach to teacher training, or other more limited strategy. Underlying the organizational approach are three major assumptions: first, the strategy must enlist a unity of purpose among all of the participants; second, it must "empower" all of the major participants and raise their feelings of efficacy and responsibility for the outcomes of the school; and third, it must build on the considerable strengths of the participants rather than decry their weaknesses.

Unity of purpose refers to agreement among parents, teachers, and students on a common set of goals for the school that will be the focal point of everyone's efforts. Clearly, these should focus on bringing children into the educational mainstream so that they can fully benefit from their further schooling experiences and adult opportunities.

Empowerment refers to the ability of the key participants to make important decisions at the school level and in the home to improve the education of students. It is based upon breaking the present stalemate among administrators, teachers, parents, and students in which the participants tend to blame each other as well as other factors "beyond their control" for the poor educational outcomes of disadvantaged students. Unless all of the major participants can be empowered to seek a common set of goals and influence the educational and social process that can achieve those goals, it is unlikely that the desired improvements will take place or be sustained (Bandura, 1986; Rogers, 1987).

An accelerated school must build upon an expanded role for all groups and must take responsibility for the educational process and educational results. Such an approach requires a shift to a school-based decision approach with heavy involvement of teachers and parents and new administrative roles (Levin, 1987). It requires information and technical assistance on alternatives as stressed in the New Haven approach (Comer, 1980), as well as a useful system of assessment that can be used as a basis for accountability and for school decision-making.

Building on strengths refers to utilizing all of the learning resources that students, parents, school staff, and communities can bring to the educational endeavor (Seeley, 1981). In the quest to place blame for the lack of efficacy of schools in improving the education of the disadvantaged, it is easy to exaggerate weaknesses of the various participants and ignore strengths. Parents have considerable strengths in serving as positive influences for the education of their children, not the least of which are a deep love for their children and a desire for their children to succeed. Teachers are capable of insights, intuition, and teaching and organizational acumen that are lost in schools that exclude teachers from participating in the decisions that they must implement. Both parents and teachers are largely underutilized sources of talent in the schools.

The strengths of disadvantaged students are often overlooked because they lack the learning behaviors associated with middle-class students. Disadvantaged students have their own unusual assets which can be used to accelerate their learning. These often include an interest in and a curiosity about oral and artistic expression, abilities to learn through the manipulation of appropriate learning materials (as stressed by Montessori, 1965, and Montessori, Jr., 1976), a capability for engrossment in intrinsically interesting tasks, and the ability to learn to write before attaining competence in decoding skills that are prerequisite to reading. In addition, such students can serve as enthusiastic and effective learning resources for other students through peer tutoring and cooperative-learning approaches.

School-based administrators are also underutilized by being placed in "command" roles to meet the directives and standard operating procedures of districts rather than working creatively with parents, staff, and students. In addition, communities have considerable resources, including youth organizations, senior citizens, businesses, and religious groups, that should be viewed as major assets for the schools and the children of the community. The strengths of these participants can be viewed as a major set of resources for creating accelerated schools.

Within the context of unity of purpose, empowerment, and building on strengths, the Accelerated School utilizes an accelerated curriculum and accelerated instructional strategies to bring all children up to grade level and into the educational mainstream. A major focus is to ensure that all students see themselves in a very positive light as productive learners with many future possibilities.

The table shows the prominent features of the school as well as the determinants of student learning that they are designed to affect. This approach shares with the "Effective Schools" literature a focus on the entire school and high expectations (Edmonds, 1979; Purkey and Smith, 1983). It differs markedly, however, in its emphasis on a staff-based decision model as opposed to the delegation of all authority to the "instructional leader."

1. *School-based Governance.* The principles set out for the Accelerated School are relatively broad ones that can be designed and implemented in a wide variety of ways. The actual choice of curriculum, instructional strategies, and other school policies will be decided by the instructional staff of the school within the latitude set by the school district. These decisions will benefit from the substantial knowledge base that exists on the various dimensions of school programs that have been shown to be particularly effective for disadvantaged students as set out below. However, the specific dimensions and their details must be considered, adopted, and molded by the school decision-makers. That

TABLE
Features of the Accelerated School for the Disadvantaged

Features

- School-based Governance
- Clear Goals
  - Students
  - Parents
  - Staff
- Pupil and School Assessment
- Nutrition and Health
- Curriculum
  - Language
  - Mathematics
  - Other Areas
- Instructional Strategies
  - Affective Aspects
  - Use of Time
  - Peer Tutoring
  - Cooperative Learning
  - Homework
- Community Resources
  - Adult Tutors
  - Businesses
  - Social-Service Agencies
- Parental Participation and Training
- Extended Session

is, the decision-making approach is a school-based one in which those who will be providing the instruction will make the decisions. As the school builds this capacity, it will be important to get parent representatives involved in the decision-making process as well.

Each school will create its own governance mechanism consisting of a governing body as a whole, a steering committee, and task-oriented committees with particular assignments that will report to the steering committee and the governing body. These decision groups will be composed of instructional staff, other staff, parent representatives, and the principal of the school. The principal will undertake an important leadership role in identifying problem areas, obtaining pertinent information, coordinating the decision process, and assisting in group dynamics. The principal will also be responsible for obtaining and allocating resources from the school district to implement decisions.

Each school will set out a program that is consonant with the strengths of the district and local staff. In this way, the reform will be developed by those who must implement and evaluate the decisions, a process that is likely to enhance professional commitment. Indeed, the ability of teachers and other school staff to work together to shape the programs that will guide their daily activities is likely to make the school dynamic and exciting from the perspective of the educational staff. It is this participation and accountability that are crucial to fully engaging the talents and commitments of educators. Details on shifting responsibilities from district offices to schools and on the internal organization of schools are discussed in Levin (1987).

2. *Goals.* In conjunction with the school district and the school board, the governing body of the school will establish a clear set of goals for students, parents, and staff with respect to the purpose of the school and its activities. The overriding goal of the Accelerated School is to bring the academic performance of students up to grade level to prepare them for mainstream educational opportunities by the completion of elementary school. The setting of overall school goals should also consider student attendance and participation in school activities; teacher attendance, participation, and morale; vandalism and behavior problems; and school contributions to the community through the performing arts and community service.

Each of the major constituencies will be consulted in setting these goals. The inculcation of school goals among students will serve to create high expectations and to improve their learning through increasing the effort and time they devote to such endeavors. For parents and school staff, the establishment of such goals should serve to raise expectations in a way that will improve the instructional resource climates of the home and school. As collaboration becomes fuller, new goals will be established and old goals may be modified.

3. *Pupil and School Assessment.* The assessment system evaluates the performance of children at school entry and sets a trajectory for meeting the overall school goal. Periodic evaluations on wide-spectrum, standardized achievement tests as well as tailored assessments created by school staff for each strand of the curriculum and school goals will enable the school to see if students are on the anticipated trajectory. Such an assessment system will serve both accountability and diagnostic purposes for improving instruction. In addition, a schoolwide assessment system needs to be established to measure progress toward other goals such as parental involvement, student and teacher attendance, and student participation.

4. *Nutrition and Health.* It is clear that the capacity of children to learn will be heavily influenced by their nutritional status and health. Children without adequate diets and with dental and health problems are not likely to have the concentration and feeling of well-being that are prerequisite to learning. Especially important are undiagnosed and untreated hearing and vision problems, since virtually all learning activities are centered around these two senses. Schools must work with families and the various social-service agencies (public and private) in the community to diagnose and address nutritional and health-care needs of disadvantaged students to improve their capacity to learn.

5. *Curriculum.* Major curriculum features that have been shown to be pertinent include a heavily language-based approach for all subjects, including mathematics (Cuevas, Mann, and McClung, 1986). Language use in all of its forms—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—must be stressed across the

curriculum (Calfee and Barton, 1987; Calfee and Henry, 1986). An emphasis will be placed on analysis, concepts, problem solving, and applications in all subjects from the early primary grades.

An especially important aspect will be the development of interesting applications that relate to the daily lives and experiences of the children and that demonstrate the usefulness of the tools and concepts that are presented. Students will be asked to discover their own applications of the concepts.

Writing will begin early in the primary grades, as soon as students are able to develop even minimal vocabularies. Students will be exposed not only to narrative and poetic forms of language use but also to exposition. Mathematics will be presented through the development of concepts and applications in order to integrate and reinforce the standard arithmetic operations (Romberg, 1986). Science and social studies will also build on the development of analytical skills, problem solving, concepts, and applications in order to provide a stimulating framework for the associative-learning tasks. Most importantly, the students will be active subjects in their learning rather than passive objects.

Substantial attention will also be placed on the arts and physical activities. These are not only important for full human development, but they are often sources of great intrinsic satisfaction for the participants. Thus these activities can play an important role in making the school a vibrant and attractive experience. The curriculum design provides conceptual and analytical tools that will enhance students' capacity to learn more advanced material while expanding effort through its purposive attempt to make the school experience more engaging (Richardson, 1987).

6. *Instructional Strategies.* The choice of instructional strategies must rely heavily on ones that will reinforce the curriculum approach and build on techniques that have shown effectiveness with the disadvantaged. Most research on these techniques has focused on "pullout" programs rather than ones that are integrated into the central organization of school instruction for mutually supportive and cumulative effects (Madden and Slavin, 1987; Slavin and Madden, 1987). The school should stress greater availability of instructional time as well as its more effective use (Denham and Lieberman, 1980; Fisher and Berliner, 1985). The instructional pace must be fast enough to keep students attentive and learning at a rate that is productive, in contrast to the deliberate slowdown usually associated with remedial instruction (Barr, 1973–74; Good and Grouws, 1978). Curriculum and teaching approaches should be used to advantage to maintain students' interest and engage them in active learning. Of special importance in this regard are techniques that are designed to enhance the affective school environment such as those suggested by Lozanov (1978) and applied by Richardson (1987) to the Accelerated School.

Peer tutoring has been shown to be an unusually effective approach for disadvantaged youngsters (Madden and Slavin, 1987). Among its advantages are the facts that it is flexible in allowing older children to tutor younger ones or more-advanced students at the same level to tutor their colleagues, and the tutors often learn as much as those whom they are tutoring. Finally, it is an ideal strategy for heterogeneous student groupings, since those who are more knowledgeable are tutors for those who need to master the material.

Cooperative learning is another effective strategy for enhancing learning among diverse groups (Cohen, 1986; Slavin, 1983). Students are given group assignments in which there are rewards for group proficiency, providing incentives for the more able students to help those who need assistance. Group approaches seem to be relatively effective for disadvantaged students, in contrast with the individual approach that is common in elementary schools.

The use of outside assignments or homework that must be done outside of the classroom is important in teaching independence and self-reliance. Such assignments can be made on a group basis or an individual basis, and they prepare students for later grades when a high proportion of learning will take place through such study. Even in the first grade, students will be given such assignments. While this strategy focuses on expanding student effort and the amount of time for learning, the other instructional strategies also address the quality of learning resources.

7. *Community Resources.* Accelerated schools must enlist all of the resources at their disposal to accomplish their mission. Among these are adult tutors who can work with individual students and provide assistance to teachers. An especially rich source of such talent is senior citizens, many of them former teachers, who seek productive activities and social interaction. In addition, local businesses can be enlisted to provide personnel and other resources to assist accelerated schools. Social-service agencies can address basic needs of families, including health care, nutrition, and counseling; and youth agencies such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts or Big Brothers and Big Sisters can offer enrichment programs for the young after school, on weekends, and during summers.

8. *Parental Participation and Training.* Parents will be deeply involved in two ways. First, all parents or guardians will be asked to affirm an agreement that clarifies the goals of the Accelerated School and the obligations of parents, students, and school staff. The agreement will be explained to parents and translated if necessary. Parental obligations will include such supportive roles as ensuring that children go to bed at a reasonable hour and attend school regularly and punctually. Parents will be asked to set high educational expectations for their children, to talk to them regularly about the importance of school, and to take an interest in their children's activities and the materials that the children bring home.

They will be asked to encourage their children to read on a daily basis and to ensure that independent assignments are addressed. They will also be expected to respond to queries from the school. The purpose is to emphasize the importance of the parental role through the dignity of a written agreement that is affirmed by all parties. Students and school staff will also have appropriate obligations regarding their roles, with the understanding that the Accelerated School will succeed only if all three parties work together.

Second, parents will be given opportunities to interact with the school program and to receive training for providing active assistance to their children. Such training will include not only the skills for working with a child but also many of the academic skills necessary to understand what the child is doing. In this respect, it may be necessary to work closely with agencies offering adult basic education to provide the parental foundation. The parental dimension can improve the capacity and effort of the child as well as increase the time devoted to academic learning and provide additional instructional resources in the home (Epstein, 1987; Kelly and Smrekar, 1987).

9. *Extended Daily Session.* An extended session until 5 P.M. will provide additional learning time for the youngsters. Following the ending of the normal school session in early afternoon or midafternoon, the extended-day program would provide a rest period, physical activities, arts activities, and a time for doing independent assignments or homework. During this period, college students and senior-citizen volunteers would work with individual students to provide learning assistance. Since many of the children are "latchkey" children, the extension of the school day is likely to be attractive to parents.

IMPLICATIONS OF ACCELERATED SCHOOLS FOR STATES

The case for creating accelerated schools for disadvantaged students is compelling. The large and growing numbers of such students; their low educational attainments under present schooling methods; and the deleterious consequences, for both these students and the larger society, of not intervening represent cogent arguments for drastic improvements in their education. We believe that the principles for creating accelerated schools are at hand and that the evidence from similar efforts by James Comer and his associates shows that such schools can bring disadvantaged students into the educational mainstream (Comer, 1986, 1987). In order for the states to move in this direction, a number of policy actions are necessary.

- The most important implication for the states is to make a clear and stated commitment to accelerating the education of disadvantaged students to bring them into the educational mainstream by elementary-school completion. Such a commitment must be reinforced by taking the actions that are necessary to implement an accelerated approach. This may require both new resources and a willingness to reallocate some of the resources that are presently devoted to secondary-school dropout prevention, teenage pregnancy reduction, and drug-prevention programs. The successful acceleration of learning and elevation of student self-esteem in the elementary years should go far to reduce later problems.

COST IMPLICATIONS FOR STATES

Not all of the dimensions of accelerated schools will have cost implications, since much of the effort will require doing different things with available resources. However, such aspects as an extended day and possible summer programs, parental education, and tutoring programs are likely to require additional resources. While we believe that major strides can be made within existing resources, the full development of accelerated schools will require additional resources for full program implementation. On the basis of benefit-cost studies, we believe that additional costs will be far outweighed by additional social benefits (Levin, 1972; Catterall, 1986).

- States should recognize that investments in accelerated education for the disadvantaged will have economic and social benefits that far exceed the magnitudes of the required investments. A concerted effort should be made to provide the necessary funding, not only because of the benefits that it confers on the disadvantaged in bringing them into the educational and social mainstream but also because of the benefits conferred upon the state as a whole.

TIME ALLOCATION FOR CHANGES AND FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

With respect to time, there are two concerns. First is the issue of how long it will take to transform an existing school to a fully accelerated one. Our own view is that this will be a developmental process that should take about six years for an elementary school with a kindergarten and six grades. As school districts gain experience in the approach and benefit from both inservice and preservice training, it may be possible to accomplish the transition in a shorter period of time (e.g., four years). Clearly, the early years must address the establishment of effective systems of staff decision-making; assessment; and curriculum goals, methods, and content; while the subsequent years can implement additional instructional features. It may also be useful to transform curricula for one or two grades each year in this transitional period.

A second aspect of time is finding enough of it during the school year and summer to enable school staff to plan and make decisions and to receive training. The existing school year provides precious little time to make a major transformation of school organization and activities. Perhaps this is one reason for the popularity of instructional "packages" that require only a few hours of staff training, even though subsequent evaluations do provide evidence that such packages are educationally effective. A larger part of the school year and summer must be freed up for school staff to invest in planning and implementation and in staff development.

- States should consider ways in which schools can obtain more time for intensive staff development to transform themselves into accelerated organizations. This can be done through providing supplementary pay for summer institutes as well as more staff-development days in which the schools receive funding for days devoted to such activities during the school year.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

In terms of school organization, it will be necessary to increase both accountability and decision responsibilities of individual schools. This can be done by creating appropriate decision structures at the local school level and providing the school with the information, technical assistance, and resources to address its challenges as well as a system of assessment that enables it to evaluate progress. It will also require the school district to change its orientation to a more service-oriented one for local school clients rather than a central agency that sets out standardized directions and directives for individual schools. A preliminary model for such changes has been proposed (Levin, 1987).

- States should provide the technical assistance to school districts and schools to modify their forms of organization to focus greater decision responsibilities on the individual school. At the same time, school districts will need assistance in creating their own technical services to assist individual schools in their jurisdictions. The states might sponsor research and management studies which will provide guidelines for the changes as well as consultants to assist individual school districts. An additional set of important products might be a range of conceptual and practical publications that the state could produce to inform a wide audience on the changes and their implementation.

INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

It is necessary to establish capacity for providing information and technical assistance to accelerated schools during the developmental phases. While we have created a modest capacity for such assistance under the Accelerated Schools Project at Stanford University—enough to work with two schools—and the beginning of a clearinghouse to support accelerated schools around the country, the ultimate support for such schools must be established in the states and the school districts themselves. At the present time the Stanford University Accelerated Schools Project is working with regional educational laboratories to expand this capacity.

- States should consider devoting resources to the development of publications and expertise on the various dimensions of accelerated education with special applicability to the disadvantaged and other underperforming students. States should sponsor more research and research syntheses on these topics, especially on different instructional strategies and organizational aspects. Results could be disseminated widely through both state publications and technical assistance.

PRESERVICE TRAINING

An accelerated school approach implies very different roles for teachers and administrators. These roles require facility in individual and group problem solving and in interacting productively in small and large groups. Instructional strategies and curriculum content for acceleration also presume the existence of knowledge and strategies among educators that are not found in conventional instructional settings or in the curriculum of training programs for teachers and administrators.

- States should review present approaches to "credentialing" teachers and administrators for working with educationally disadvantaged populations. The accelerated school approach requires a much heavier emphasis on group dynamics, problem solving, assessment of curriculum and pupil progress, and parent programs than do conventional schools. In addition, teacher-training and administrator-training programs in state universities will need to adopt new courses and training experiences as well as to establish internships in schools that are dedicated to accelerated learning.

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ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY PREVENTION

What Schools Can Do

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President
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A recent *Wall Street Journal* article reported the results of a questionnaire distributed to two junior-high classes in a very depressed area of Detroit (*Wall Street Journal*, 17 June 1987). The survey found that a third of the children had been offered drugs and two-thirds knew someone their age who was selling them. But when asked about their aspirations, the responses of teens in this school paralleled those in any junior high school across the country. They wanted to be doctors, nurses, computer programmers.

One response, however, stood out, reflecting the day-to-day real-life hurdles that keep many of our disadvantaged young people from achieving the goals we argue everyone in America has the right to dream of and reach for. A fifteen-year-old wrote, in painful handwriting and crude spelling, that her definition of the American dream is "to go to school and fenisch my schooling without getting prenant."

As the heads of state departments of education, you [chief state school officers] sit at the helm of a ship that is expected to take *all* of our youth across the stormy seas of adolescence and deposit them, eager and well-prepared, on the pier of adulthood. Clearly, there are many reasons that keep some children from ever boarding that ship; that prevent some, though boarded, from lasting through the trip; and that cause some, even though they survive the journey, to arrive at that pier without the requisite skills, information, contacts, or opportunities. Some of these reasons center on the individual child, some on the child's family, some on the institutions that are supposed to help families help their children through this journey, and some on the integrity and efficiency of the crew and equipment of the transitional vessel itself—the schools.

Few would argue with the premise that the primary job of schools is to help children and teens formulate and achieve their educational and career goals through the development of solid basic skills and sound critical-thinking abilities—that schools should be in the business of helping children and youth prepare to become the doctors, teachers, computer programmers they aspire to be. But what of the fifteen-year-old girl whose very realistic ambition is to complete her education before she begins a family?

Ultimately, pregnancy prevention is achieved through only one of two means: abstinence or contraception. Schools have neither the mandate nor the capacity to monitor these personal decisions. But if we back up from these "bottom line" personal decisions to examine the array of decisions, behaviors, opportunities, and beliefs that may, in the end, determine whether a teen is able to avoid pregnancy, the possibilities for school involvement and leadership in pregnancy prevention rapidly increase.

This paper examines several issues central to our understanding of the problem and of what schools can do. First, it discusses why early parenthood is much more of a problem in the 1980s than it was in the 1960s or even 1970s. Second, it presents data showing that poor teens with poor basic reading and mathematics skills—those at greater risk of dropping out and being unemployed—are far more likely to begin parenthood as teens than are those at lesser risk. Third, it outlines some of the things that schools can do to help reduce the incidence of teen pregnancy in America—from improving basic skills, to family-life education, to health clinic linkages, to early-childhood education and school-university partnerships, to before-school and summer programs, to opening doors to community organizations that want to help teens and parents get needed information. Finally, it discusses the need to take further steps to help pregnant teens and teen parents become economically self-sufficient.

WHY IS ADOLESCENT PARENTHOOD A PROBLEM?

Each day in 1985, 844 babies were born to young women under eighteen who should have been in school (National Center for Health Statistics, 1987). These numbers are certainly sobering, but do they alone point to a problem?

No. There have always been teenage mothers. The number of babies born to teens, in fact, has been dropping steadily since the mid-1970s. In 1983, the number of teen births dipped below 500,000 for the first time since before 1960.[1] But today, teen births are likely to interrupt and perhaps forestall the complex process of becoming an adult in a way that was not true even a few decades ago. This is the problem.

Early parenthood sharply decreases young adults' earning power by reducing their chances of completing school and marrying, while simultaneously increasing their need for employment and income. The tension between those two opposing trends has increased to the point that far too many teen parents just cannot make it. Too early entry into the world of adults—the world of work and parenthood—now not only puts teens at a disadvantage relative to their peers but often puts them in poverty.

During the past thirty to forty years, the importance of secondary and higher education to a youth's ability to compete in the job market has increased vastly. In 1960, six out of ten of America's young workers had high-school diplomas. In 1980, 85 percent did. It is far harder today to find a job that does not require a diploma, and those jobs that do not require one often pay wages so low that the workers cannot support families.

- In 1973 young male college graduates earned 25 percent more than high-school dropouts; by 1982, their average earnings were nearly twice those of dropouts.[2]
- In 1973 more than two-thirds of all male dropouts aged twenty through twenty-four earned enough to support a family of three above the poverty line; by 1985 less than one-third earned enough to lift them over this line.
- In 1967 the median weekly earnings of young full-time workers sixteen to twenty-four years old were 75 percent of those of older workers. By 1986 the earning power of such young workers had declined to only 57 percent of that of older workers.
- Between 1973 and 1984 the average real annual earnings among males aged twenty to twenty-four fell by nearly 30 percent (from $11,572 to $8,072 in 1984 dollars). This severe drop affected all groups of young males—whether white, black, or Hispanic—although black men were disproportionately hit as they experienced a 50 percent loss in real wages.

Solid basic reading and mathematics skills, a high-school diploma, and delayed parenthood are rapidly becoming prerequisites of minimal economic survival. And increasingly, two parents, two diplomas, and two incomes are required for economic security once childbearing has begun. Schools, at the least, can play a role in increasing the likelihood that young parents will be able to support their children adequately by offering pregnant teens and teen parents the added supports needed to stay in school and prepare themselves for the labor force. But there is much that schools can do on the prevention side as well.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN POOR BASIC SKILLS, POVERTY, AND EARLY PARENTHOOD

Some would argue that if teens were rational, future-oriented thinkers, arming them with the depressing facts on the declining earning power of teens in general, and of high-school dropouts in particular, would be enough to cause a sharp drop in teen pregnancy rates. This argument is true for teens whose futures, in the absence of early parenthood, hold promise, But what of those whose looks ahead reveal little that is positive? Poor and minority youths who see no opportunities on the horizon are far less likely than other teens to appreciate the risks and the burdens of early parenthood. Many disadvantaged youths sense that they have nothing to lose by becoming parents. They feel no doors will be closed by teen pregnancy because they believe from the outset that no doors are open to them. The confidence among young people that there is a positive, attainable future worth planning and preparing for is therefore a powerful and necessary element in adolescent pregnancy prevention.

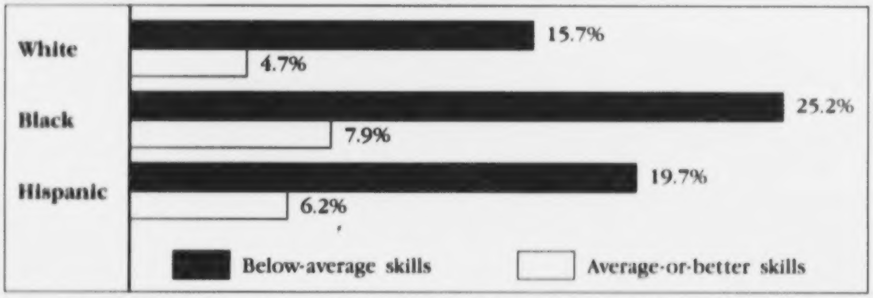
Data on a variety of educational attainment and achievement measures—from reading scores to dropout statistics to SAT results—make it clear that many poor and minority youths often do not receive the education they need to compete in the labor market or cope with other demands of adult life.

Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Americans (NLS) document the strong relationship between poor basic skills, limited life options, and teenage childbearing. With surprising consistency, teenagers with poor basic skills are far more likely to become parents at an early age than are those with average or above-average academic skills.[3]

- Sixteen- to nineteen-year-old women with poor basic skills are more than three times as likely to be parents as are those with average-or-better basic skills (Figure 1).
- Teens with poor basic skills are five times more likely to become mothers before age sixteen and four times more likely than those with average basic skills to have more than one child while in their teens.
- Teens with similar family incomes and basic skills levels—whether white, black, or Hispanic—have nearly identical rates of teenage childbearing.
- Among teenage girls, one in five poor teens with lower-than-average basic skills is a mother. This is true of white, black, and Hispanic young women. The proportions who are mothers are almost identical (Figure 2).

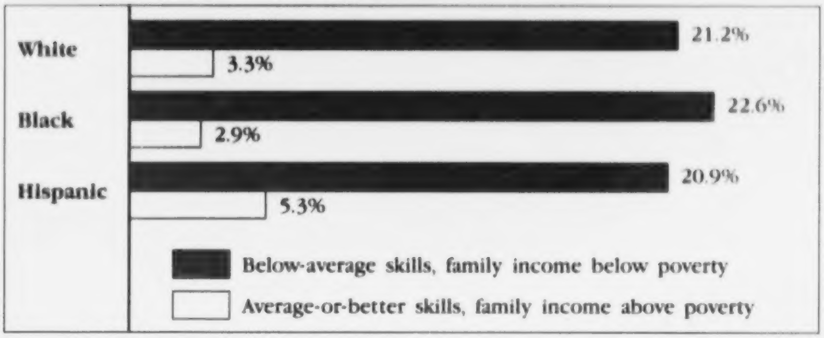
The feeling of competency and the belief in future options that come with mastery of basic skills have the same preventive effect on childbearing for minority teens that they do for white teens. Therefore, we have to be saddened by the fact that so few disadvantaged teens are acquiring the skills that would give them feelings of competency and optimism. The basic-skills data from the NLS survey are truly sobering:

FIGURE 1
Parenthood by Basic Skills Levels,
16–19-Year-Old Women, 1981



Source: Unpublished analyses of the National Longitudinal Survey, courtesy of Andrew Sum, Northeastern University

FIGURE 2
Parenthood by Poverty and Basic Skills Levels, 16–19-Year-Old Women, 1981



Source: Unpublished analyses of the National Longitudinal Survey, courtesy of Andrew Sum, Northeastern University

- More than half of the fifteen- to eighteen-year-olds surveyed with family incomes below the poverty line have basic skills in the bottom skills group. Poor teens are four times as likely to have poor basic skills as are teens with family incomes above the poverty line.
- More than half of the black fifteen- to eighteen-year-olds in the NLS survey and four out of ten of the Hispanic teens fall in the bottom skills group, compared to 13 percent of the white teens. Among teens living in poverty, more than four out of ten white teens, more than half of Hispanic teens, and more than six out of ten black teens are in the bottom skills group.
- The level of basic academic skills makes a difference even among young adults with the same amount of schooling. High-school dropouts with strong basic skills have average earnings more than twice those of dropouts with weak basic skills. Similarly, high-school graduates with basic skills ranking in the top fifth among their peers have earnings nearly double those of graduates in the lowest fifth.

A TWO-PRONGED PREVENTION STRATEGY

The teens who enter the ranks of parenthood each year are neither predominantly poor nor predominantly minority, but disadvantaged youths account for a disproportionate share of the nation's teen pregnancies and births.

- About six out of ten of the babies born to teens are born to white, non-Hispanic teens, but minority teens have disproportionately higher rates of early childbearing, accounting for only 27 percent of the adolescent population but about 40 percent of teen births.[4]

- Six out of ten of the babies born to teens are born to teens from nonpoor families, but poor teens are two and a half times more likely to become teen parents than are nonpoor teens.[5]

Strong connections between poverty (which limits opportunities), poor academic skills (which limit youths' abilities to capitalize on opportunities), and early parenthood suggest that reducing adolescent pregnancy rates in the United States will require a two-pronged prevention strategy:

- Targeted efforts to improve disadvantaged teens' life options, through improvements in skills, knowledge, and information exposure; and through opportunities for quality education, above-poverty-wage jobs, and involvement in the life of the community.
- A national effort to 1) increase *all* children's and teens' access to timely and accurate information and to noncritical advice and counseling (including counseling to postpone sexual involvement) through the development or expansion of family-, school-, and community-based family-life and sexuality education; media campaigns; public education; and teen hotlines; 2) increase teens' access to appropriate comprehensive health services for teens (in or near schools, housing projects, community centers) and increase funding of family-planning services; and 3) create signals that tell young people that sex is not "bliss without consequences."

School-based pregnancy-prevention strategies should certainly include efforts to increase teens' access to the sexuality-specific information, counseling, and services they need to delay sexual activity and avoid pregnancy. Many schools, working in consort with public agencies and private organizations, are providing these much-needed supports. But these data suggest that first and foremost, school-based pregnancy-prevention efforts should focus on basic education improvement and dropout prevention.

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

1. BROADEN THEIR APPROACH TO EDUCATING AT-RISK YOUTH

Schools alone certainly are not responsible for the developmental deficits found so widely among disadvantaged teens. Nor must schools by themselves attempt to correct these deficits and prevent their occurrence in future school cohorts. But there are three reasons that schools are essential in any effort to improve the life options of disadvantaged teens: 1) many schools are failing to educate these teens and to respond to their needs; 2) these teens, because of limited family and community resources, urgently need schools that are committed to educating them well and that are responsive to nonacademic needs, since unmet needs may stifle their academic and social development; and

3) there is mounting evidence that well-designed schools and committed teachers and administrators can be responsive to disadvantaged students' needs and can help them achieve success in school.

There are five areas in which children and youths need assistance in becoming self-sufficient adults who can form healthy families (Figure 3).

- Education—developing solid academic skills (the ability to read, write, and perform basic mathematical functions), sound decision-making and problem-solving skills, and a good knowledge base.

FIGURE 3 **Preparing Youths for Adulthood**

	Education	**Health**	**Work Preparation**	**Social Responsibility/ Awareness**	**Personal Growth**
Information/ Decision-making Skills	• basic skills (verbal, writing . . .) • basic knowledge • problem-solving skills • learning skills	• education, understanding growth, development, and health risks • value of regular health care	• understanding function and value of work • developing healthy work attitudes • exposure to variety of work environments, jobs, and adult workers	• understanding of individual's role in society and of societal change • cultural awareness • social awareness	• development of self-identity, self-discipline, interpersonal skills, and coping strategies
Assessment/ Guidance/ Referral	• monitoring progress • assessing special educational needs • helping with school choices • helping with curriculum/class choices	• identification of problem/need • assessment/ screening • counseling • locating affordable and appropriate health resources • understanding health systems	• defining criteria for choosing job/assessing interests, skills, and goals • making job preparation plans • job search assistance • college choice assistance	• identification of antisocial behavior • recognition of socially responsible behavior	• assessment of talent, interests, potential • mental-health screening
Direct Supports/ Opportunities	• formal instruction • informal instruction • homework assistance • tutoring • remedial instruction • special/ alternative instruction	• preventive health care • general exams • mental-health services • medical treatment for illness or injury • therapy	• post-secondary education • vocational training • on-the-job training/work experience • part-time work and summer employment • volunteer/paid jobs	• counseling/ group homes • community group membership • community volunteer services • leadership opportunities	• counseling (indiv., family, group) • developmental education (sexuality, family life, relationships) • nonacademic opportunities for success
Outcomes	• high-school diploma/basic competencies	• good health	• job	• community involvement/ good citizenship	• strong positive self-concept

Source: Children's Defense Fund

- Health—getting healthy, staying healthy, and avoiding prevalent health-related risks in adolescence such as pregnancy, substance abuse, depression, and stress.
- Work preparation—identifying and building work-related skills and getting exposure to a wide range of work experiences, both on the job and through contacts with adults.
- Social responsibility/social awareness—developing a sense of connection with the community, and understanding how it functions and how it can be changed.
- Personal growth—growing up, understanding themselves and others, assessing their attitudes and values, and finding nonacademic avenues for success and growth, including community service, recreation, and sports.

In each of these areas, children and youths need basic information and support to build their potential for making decisions, and they need adult monitoring, counseling, and guidance. Across all of these areas, they need help in assessing their progress, making choices, and identifying and linking up with needed supports and opportunities.

In setting priorities, school officials must begin with the central mission of educating children and giving youths the basic academic skills necessary for the transition to adulthood. The results of considerable research now are available on the attributes of effective schools, successful strategies for remedial education, and alternative approaches for improving school performance and student achievement. Ensuring that all schools move beyond destructive cycles of poor leadership, low expectations from teachers, and heavy reliance upon grade repetition should be a first priority for all concerned about schools and adolescent pregnancy.

In moving beyond the narrow realm of basic education, schools no doubt will be forced to make choices—to decide what needs are most pressing in the community and where the involvement of schools can have the greatest impact in helping to reduce teen pregnancies. But the tension between these nonacademic initiatives and the schools' responsibility for basic education is often exaggerated. Indeed, many efforts to address the seemingly "nonacademic" needs of disadvantaged youths prove to be essential elements of an effective strategy for improving the basic academic skills of these students, as the work of Dr. James Comer and others makes clear.

Many schools traditionally keep their doors open after school for a variety of sports, extracurricular, and remedial activities. Even during the school day, schools can, should, and sometimes do offer much of the diverse programming that community programs provide in the after-school and summer hours. Physical education, music, dance, creative-writing classes, cultural arts programs, field trips to cultural institutions and work sites, family-life education programs that include small-group discussions, and student councils that provide opportunities for leadership are activities included in many middle schools and junior-high schools during the regular school day.

After-school programs should not be the sole responsibility of community groups. While school-sponsored after-school programs may not be comprehensive, traditional extracurricular activities—sports, drama, orchestra and band, debating, and various academic clubs—are important in many adolescents' lives.

Unfortunately, in this era of tight funding and emphasis on "back-to-basics" education, schools, particularly schools in low-income neighborhoods, often see academic instruction as competing for scarce resources with nonacademic, extracurricular, or after-school activities. While academics are obviously important, ignoring the nonacademic needs of young adolescents thwarts efforts to develop well-rounded young people. Bypassing extra opportunities for basic skills development also undercuts the schools' educational achievement itself. And by decreasing or eliminating nonacademic programs and classes, whether during or after school, schools may be eliminating the activities that can entice low-achieving youths into the school culture and toward learning and achievement.

2. INVEST IN EARLY-CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Efforts in elementary and secondary schools to both broaden and deepen the positive impact schools have on at-risk children and youth are clearly needed and clearly worth the investment, given the alternatives. But few would disagree that a good preschool experience is vital for at-risk children.

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is one of the many organizations that have long recognized the value of a supportive early-childhood-development experience for low-income children. Head Start, of course, has been the model for such programs for over two decades. Ironically, in part because of the success of Head Start, parents from all income groups are increasingly seeking an early-childhood-development-center or nursery-school experience for their three- and four-year-olds. Primarily because poor families cannot afford to pay for preschool themselves, we are seeing a pattern that leaves low-income children behind and creates a two-tier system of care for our youngest children.

Sixty-seven percent of four-year-olds from families with median incomes over $35,000 attended a preschool program in 1985, compared with only 33 percent of those in families with incomes under $10,000. Fifty percent of three-year-olds in families with incomes over $35,000 attended a preschool program, as opposed to 17 percent of those in families with incomes under $10,000.[6]

One answer to this problem is to build on a proven success through increasing Head Start programs. A second, complementary answer is to have the public-education system expand its preschool efforts. Twenty-seven states now invest some state funds in early-childhood-development programs, most of them targeted to reach low-income children. States are taking varying approaches—from adding state funds to supplement Head Start to creating new programs through departments of education.

While the primary goal of Head Start and the schools in running preschool programs must be to meet the developmental needs of the children, the programs also have to confront the reality of the lives of their parents. One such reality is that the majority of preshool children have working mothers. Today, over 10 million children under age six have mothers in the labor force (Hofferth and Phillips, 1987).

- Most employed mothers work full time. Even when their youngest child is under three, about 66 percent of employed mothers are full-time workers.
- By 1995 two-thirds of all preschool children (and three-quarters of school-age children) will have mothers in the work force (Hofferth and Phillips, 1987).

The needs of these children are not being met, by and large, by new state preschool initiatives, because they only provide for a part-day program. A two-and-a-half-hour day presents a new set of scheduling problems as well as confusion for young children whose mothers are working outside the home. While many parents are trying to patch together two or even three child-care arrangements for their children, there is a growing concern that being cared for by multiple care-givers during a single day—especially two groups or center-type arrangements—may not be an optimal situation for youngsters.

In short, more and more very young children need preschool, but they need some full-day arrangement. In some cases this may mean a full day in the preschool or Head Start setting or in a comprehensive child-care setting. It is important not to view "preschool" as some mystical service separate and apart from child care. In reality, most high-quality child-care programs for three- and four-year-olds encompass the components of good preschool programs. In others it may mean that the child spends part of the day in a good preschool program and part of the day in a decent child-care setting. In either event, the public school system has to participate in devising the solution and, if it decides on only a part-day program, help families by making school facilities available for child-care programs or by sharing with other public and private agencies the responsibility for arranging and providing transportation to child care.

The Act for Better Child-Care Services, a comprehensive child-care bill currently before Congress, recognizes the important role that the schools can play in child care. The bill would allow schools to use funds to operate child-care programs and to provide subsidies to low- and moderate-income families. In addition, the bill sets aside money to allow schools to extend the number of hours that part-day, preschool programs operate, to better meet the needs of working parents.

One final but critical question is program quality. Too many recent preschool initiatives have not yet included all of the following key criteria in their efforts. Elements central to a high-quality early-childhood experience that must be addressed in developing new initiatives are as follows:

- Hiring staff with education, training, and experience in working with young children. ("Education" does not necessarily mean "formal academic credentials.")
- Allowing existing child-care and Head Start programs, as well as school districts, to operate the new and additional programs.
- Maintaining small child-to-staff ratios and small group size.
- Guarding against the implementation of eligibility guidelines that label young children as academically deficient.
- Creating a funding mechanism to operate a high-quality program that assures a per-child reimbursement based on the real cost of providing quality care for four-year-olds. This should be done by using kindergarten and first-grade costs to determine funding needs.
- Involving parents in the planning and operating of the program.
- Operating in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of minority children and families with diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Utilizing the expertise of child-care providers and early childhood professionals in planning and operating the program.
- Assuring that funds are not taken from the existing child-care system to begin new preschool efforts.
- Providing an age-appropriate curriculum as opposed to simply adjusting the kindergarten program downwards.

The essentials require a solid financial commitment if they are to be combined into a quality program. Much of the states' growing interest in preschools has been spurred by the success of the Perry Preschool Project inYpsilanti, Michigan. It would have cost $5,000 per child to replicate the Perry Preschool Program in 1985 dollars. However, it costs $3,500 each time a child repeats a grade in school.

3. HELP BUILD TEENS' CAPACITY TO DELAY PREGNANCY: SEXUALITY EDUCATION, COUNSELING, AND HEALTH SERVICES

Expanding Sexuality Education The idea that giving teens information about sex and sexuality is tantamount to giving them license is unfounded. This false perception has had unfortunate consequences. It has allowed opponents of formal sexuality education to imply that the bulk of what is being offered to young people is contraceptive education, when, in fact, existing programs are far broader in content and goals. While reinforcing the premise that parents are the primary educators of their children, our efforts must continue to

1. engage the full spectrum of individuals and agencies that reach youth in efforts to bolster parent-child communication by providing instruction and support for both parents and children;

2. provide information and opportunities for discussion of a wide range of topics, including information about physical development, family and gender roles, parent-child communication, and decision making;
3. have as a goal the development of healthy young men and women who can make informed decisions about this very important aspect of their lives.

Schools *should* be involved in helping parents provide timely and accurate information on sexuality and family life. But so should churches, youth-serving agencies, health providers (including family-planning agencies), and any adults who play a significant role in youths' lives. A good classroom-based course can dispel a lot of myths and lay the groundwork for further communication and thinking, but even the best course is of limited use to the young teen who has burning questions during the summer. Children need basic information, but they also need opportunities to discuss this information and their opinions and concerns more informally with groups of peers and adults, and opportunities to talk privately with adults when they have pressing concerns.

Linking Sexuality Education with Counseling Community-based organizations such as girls' clubs, boys' clubs, Y's, and churches, as well as family-counseling agencies and family-planning service providers, are increasingly offering these kinds of opportunities to teens (and to their parents) off school grounds. Some of these groups, however, have linked with schools to provide these services during or after school hours.

For example, Inwood House, a New York City-based community agency serving young single women and their children, was invited to provide pregnancy prevention services in the New York City public schools in 1978. In 1986 their Teen Choice program was in operation in two junior and five senior high schools in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Teen Choice offers information, counseling, and referrals on human sexuality, family planning, pregnancy, and parenting to teenage girls and boys through semester-long discussion groups (offered as a voluntary alternative to physical education) and through classroom presentations.

The staff encourages students to postpone intercourse for as long as possible, to postpone parenthood beyond the teenage years, and to make informed, nonpressured decisions (which include using contraceptives if choosing to be sexually active). Teen Choice social workers are also available for individual counseling and are consulted not only for sexuality and pregnancy-related concerns but also for general mental-health evaluation and counseling, suicide intent, family programs, and general social-services referrals.

In other programs, sexuality education, counseling, or discussion groups are being built into school-linked programs that address other development needs.

School-based health clinics (or adolescent clinics linked to schools through staff-sharing arrangements) provide both counseling and clinic services. Their counseling efforts often are overlooked in discussions about why these clinics are effective. While there are no independent data on the effect of the education-counseling combination on sexual activity and pregnancy, it is clear that clinic providers see counseling as an essential part of their work. This explains their heavy emphasis on individual and group counseling and education as primary program components.

Linking Teens with Health Services We have seen a tremendous growth of interest in comprehensive, school-based clinics over the past few years. But school-based clinics, as examples of strong health programs, stand in sharp contrast to what normally exists in public schools. School health programs, like school counseling programs, have suffered under funding cuts and changes in funding priorities. Many programs have been scaled back and some have been eliminated completely. About $1 billion of the estimated $102 billion national annual school budget is spent on school health services—about $25 per child per year. A 1981 survey found that forty-two states required health instruction in the school curriculum, but only thirteen required a health room or clinic in each school.

Expanding the use of school-based nurse practitioners would be an important step toward upgrading school health services. At present, only about 1,000 of the 45,000 registered nurses working in schools are nurse practitioners (Kohn, 1979). Nurse practitioners can—under the supervision of a physician—diagnose and treat a broad range of illnesses, conduct health assessments, and follow established protocols (including writing some kinds of prescriptions). Studies comparing school nurse practitioners with school nurses found that practitioners spent twice as much time caring for patients; had three times the number of daily contacts with parents to discuss physical, emotional, or learning problems; and, because of their ability to give on-site treatment, sent home from school about one-half as many pupils. A large demonstration program sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that expanded school health programs could be managed successfully. Annual costs per student ranged from $43 to $83 (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 1985).

School-based clinics now can be found in more than sixty-one schools in twenty-seven communities in seventeen states across the country, as reported by the Support Center for School-Based Clinics (Lovick and Wesson, 1986). An almost equal number are in the planning stages, and, while there is not an exact count, there are probably an equal or greater number of clinics across the country that are not on school grounds but are linked with schools, recreation centers, or other community organizations that serve youths. These clinics, located primarily in schools in low-income neighborhoods where general access to health care is limited and unmet health needs are great, offer comprehensive primary health care to teens at a cost that averages between $100 and $150 per teen per year. Comprehensive care is important because teens, especially poor teens, have a very wide range of unmet health needs.

- The Robert Wood Johnson National School Health Services Program found that 83 percent of the problems detected when schoolchildren were examined were previously unknown. Many were significant. While school health workers were able to treat nearly all of these problems, many could have resulted in long-term health problems if left unresolved (RWJF, 1986).

- Nearly 16 percent of children in New York have no health insurance. Poor children are even more dramatically uninsured. This leaves many children without access to needed health services. A conservative estimate of the health problems among schoolchildren in New York City found that one in ten had a referable vision condition and one in fifteen required treatment for a hearing problem (New York City Department of Health, 1984).

The comprehensive adolescent health clinic, located on or near school grounds, serves a dual purpose. It is a response to high levels of unmet general health needs in schools serving teens with poor access to medical services and a way of maximizing the effect of a first-rate family-life and sexuality-education program. As such, the clinic is an extension of the two programs just discussed that should be in all schools—family life/sex education and health services.

It is important to note that reproductive health services account for only a fraction of clinic visits. An estimated 80 percent of the visits are for nonreproductive primary health needs (Bachrach and Mosher, 1984). (Student use of these clinics for either general or reproductive health care is always dependent upon written parental consent.) Even within the area of reproductive health, it is important to understand that these clinics do much more than dispense contraceptives.

Clearly, not every school needs a school-based clinic. Equally important, not every low-income school or every school with high pregnancy rates needs a school-based clinic (accessibility, not location in a school, is the issue), and not every school-based clinic needs to dispense contraceptives. Not every school that should house a clinic (because of a lack of other appropriate service locations) will be able to staff a school-based clinic in the near future. We need to glean, from the successes of these intensive model services, elements that can be applied less expensively and implemented in a variety of settings with a minimum of public controversy.

4. KEEP PREGNANT TEENS AND TEEN PARENTS IN SCHOOL

For teen parents to succeed in their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency, they must have solid academic skills, as well as sound decision-making and problem-solving skills, that will help them to compete in the labor market and cope with other demands of adult life. Schools and other educational programs are therefore essential parts of a self-sufficiency strategy for teen parents.

Too often, however, it is assumed that pregnant teens and teen parents are a representative sample of the in-school population. These teens, it is commonly acknowledged, face high risks of dropping out of school. Half of teen parents younger than eighteen have not obtained their diplomas by the time they are in their twenties, and four out of ten teen women leaving school cite pregnancy or marriage as the reason for leaving.[7] However, these low rates of school completion typically are attributed to the demands and difficulties of pregnancy and parenthood rather than to the underlying educational deficits of teens who become parents at an early age. Until recently, relatively little attention has been paid to the possibility that teens who become parents may have been doing poorly in school before they became pregnant. Data now suggest that this is a very strong possibility:

- Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Americans show that three out of four of the fourteen- and fifteen-year-old mothers had basic skill deficiencies in reading and mathematics that ranked them in the bottom one-fifth of skills of all girls in their age group.
- Analyses of the *High School and Beyond* data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics show that more than one-fourth of the teens who had dropped out of school and had a child between their sophomore and senior years had dropped out before they became pregnant (Barro, 1984).

Because teenagers' basic academic skills shape to a considerable degree both their likelihood of bearing children out of wedlock at an early age and their future employment prospects, education is a vital part of efforts to prevent welfare dependency. Analyses of the National Longitudinal Survey data collected by Andrew Sum of Northeastern University indicate that young women (aged eighteen to twenty-four) with poor basic reading and mathematics skills are four times more likely to receive benefits from the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program than are those with average basic skills, undoubtedly in part because of their increased risk of early parenthood. Two-thirds of all AFDC mothers between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one have basic skills that place them in the bottom one-fifth of all young women in their age group.[8]

Educational goals for teen parents, including those on AFDC, must be established through individualized assessments of their strengths and needs. Those who have already graduated from high school should be encouraged to explore options for college-level courses. Others who have dropped out before graduation will be able, with appropriate child-care and other supports, to return to their regular high-school programs and obtain their diplomas. But many will need special help to strengthen their basic skills, including remedial education tailored to their individual abilities and the supportive services necessary to keep them moving toward graduation or completion of a GED.

The common expectation that teen mothers should continue in or return to their regular school shortly after delivery ignores the needs of many teen parents—their special educational needs as well as those specifically related to parenthood. Few schools can provide the additional supports that teen parents often require to cope with the demands of parenthood. Further, many schools are not well equipped to serve teens who have fallen far behind their peers academically. For these reasons, requiring teen parents to return to their regular schools without recognizing their individual needs or the capacity of schools to respond to them can be a sure prescription for failure.

In response to the needs of teen parents and other at-risk youths who do not fare well in the traditional school environment, more flexible programs have been developed to allow students to work at their own pace with the individualized attention that they need to succeed. Examples include the following nontraditional approaches:

- The Bridge Program in Boston established its own program of high-school equivalency courses because it found that the pregnant and parenting adolescents in the program often did not do well in existing GED programs, which had little experience with their needs. The program employs two teachers and a remedial-education specialist and holds special graduation ceremonies each year. Follow-up is also provided by job-development and career-guidance counselors.
- The Comprehensive Competencies Program developed by the Remediation and Training Institute in Washington, D.C., offers a state-of-the-art system for individualized, self-paced instruction that can be used by schools or community-based organizations to improve the basic skills of teens who do not get the help they need in traditional classrooms. With support from the Ford Foundation, the program has been tested in nearly 200 sites serving 10,000 learners, including teen parents and other teens at risk of school failure as well as adults with poor basic skills.

While it is very important that we recognize the fact that teen mothers (and teen fathers) fall heavily in the bottom of the basic skills distribution, it is equally important that we not let early parenthood close the academic gates on those teens who could benefit from college or long-term postsecondary education. Obviously, teen parents have immediate income needs that press for a quick end to their education and employment training. But it is often short-sighted on their part—and often on our part—not to see the long-term benefits of continued education and training. The immediate needs for some income should be balanced against the long-term needs for earnings above minimum wage.

Schools, then, must take care neither to overestimate nor to underestimate the educational potential of pregnant teens and teen parents. Realizing that these young people's future needs for employment and earnings have become present needs, schools must make every effort to maximize their opportunities for learning. In many states, the Carl Perkins Act is being used to offer pregnant teens and teen mothers training in nontraditional careers.

Any educational programs targeted at pregnant teens and teen parents, however, must recognize the needs teen parents have for health-care, child-care, transportation, counseling and housing, and income-support services. Schools, obviously, cannot and should not take on these responsibilities alone. But it is clear that, if not addressed, these immediate needs will quickly overwhelm many young parents and force them to leave school.

Research, for example, has found lack of adequate child care to be the teen parent's greatest single barrier to participation in educational programs (Wallace, Weeks, and Medina, 1982). Where possible, on-site child care or child care that is easily accessible from the educational program should be arranged so parents can be involved in the care of their infants and toddlers, enhancing their own parenting skills as well as their children's well-being.

The Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Project (TAPP) in San Francisco is a fine example of how schools and public agencies can coordinate efforts to assist pregnant and parenting teens. TAPP is currently in three high schools and also has a primary site for teens who are in other schools or are no longer enrolled in school. The backbone of the project is the "Continuous Counselor," who provides personal counseling and case management for the teens. The counselor serves as the primary contact, personalizing the relationship between the client and the service network. The network consists of a variety of agencies that come to the schools or to the primary TAPP site to provide special education, health services, nutritional information, and counseling to the teens and their families. The program is open to all teens regardless of their school enrollment status or income level. The results attributed to TAPP include the reduction of the incidence of low-birth-weight babies born to teens, an increased rate of school completion, and a significant reduction in the number of repeat pregnancies.

On-site or coordinated health care, child care, and case management are obviously an ideal way to help pregnant teens and teen parents stay in school while dealing with the increased complexity of their lives, but there are other ways. We would strongly recommend that, at the state and district levels, policies and procedures that stand as real or potential barriers between these teens and their educations be identified and analyzed. Often, things as simple as the regulations governing who can ride the school bus can stand as a barrier between a teen parent and school.

In an era of demands for improvements in academic achievement and for educational reforms at state and local levels, the burdens on our public schools are great. School officials are being asked to raise standards and promote academic excellence while at the same time ensuring that lower-achieving students are not left behind. Schools also are called upon to respond to a host of other national ills, ranging from alcohol and drug abuse to teen suicide and juvenile delinquency.

How can schools reconcile efforts to address the adolescent pregnancy problem with this array of competing demands? In part, schools and others who are concerned about teen pregnancy must recognize that success in the schools' central mission—developing basic academic skills—in itself makes a major contribution to adolescent pregnancy prevention. A foundation of sound basic skills in childhood and early adolescence is essential to the future achievement, self-esteem, and life options that encourage disadvantaged youths to delay pregnancy.

But virtually all schools also offer some nonacademic courses, activities, or services in response to the broader needs of youth. These efforts reflect a recognition that the strongest academic programs can be rendered ineffective by students' personal problems or low expectations for future success. They also reflect an awareness that responses to adolescents' other needs can yield significant dividends in academic achievement: providing school-convenient health services can reduce absentee rates; work-related programs can spur motivation for in-school learning; in-school and after-school opportunities for social development and responsibility can increase school retention and completion rates; and child-care services can make staying in school feasible for teen parents. Few schools have the resources to address all of these diverse needs, yet schools have managed—often by collaborating with parents, community groups, businesses, and universities—to tackle a wide array of problems and mount effective responses to specific needs.

CDF's adolescent pregnancy-prevention activities reflect the complexities of the problem and the multiple strategies that need to be pursued if we are to break the cycle of dependency and underachievement that so often is the cause and consequence of early unintended parenthood. Through the following seven program elements, developed since 1983, CDF aims to involve teens, parents, community groups, providers, and decision makers in acting to prevent teen pregnancy, alleviate the range of problems facing households headed by adolescents and females, make sure babies of teens get adequate prenatal care, and come to grips with the needs of low-income youth for hope, positive life options, and the skills and opportunities to move toward adult self-sufficiency.

- An annual conference that brings together people from every discipline and state to share progress and problems in combating teen pregnancy.
- A continuous menu of policy options—for consideration by national, state, and local governments—to bolster self-sufficiency among young people and to invest preventively in children.
- An Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Clearinghouse that was established in 1985 to serve as a central referral, resource, and information point. The Clearinghouse produces six bimonthly reports each year on various aspects of teen pregnancy prevention and has prepared a general-public prevention brochure, *Preventing Children Having Children: What You Can Do,* designed to meet the ever-escalating inquiries resulting from CDF's media campaign and other activities.
- An Adolescent Pregnancy Child Watch that was launched in 1984 to conduct local needs assessments and mobilize leadership. Networks of volunteers were active in seventy communities in thirty states by 1987. They are assessing the needs in their communities of youths at risk of pregnancy and working on reports and follow-up action. Collaborating groups include the Association of Junior Leagues, the National Council of Negro Women, the March of Dimes, and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women.

- A five-year Prenatal Care Campaign, begun in 1985 and designed to help speed the nation's progress toward the Surgeon General's 1990 goals for better prenatal care, fewer low-birth-weight babies, and a decrease in infant mortality. CDF has targeted a few sites for intensive prenatal-care campaigns and efforts. At the beginning of each year, CDF publishes a *Maternal and Child Health Data Book* that tracks the nation's progress (or lack of it) on a state-by-state basis on a range of health indicators, as well as rates of teen and out-of-wedlock births. A CDF prenatal-care coordinator provides ongoing technical assistance to health officials and advocates.
- A five-year media campaign begun in 1986 and designed to create a national climate of concern about teen pregnancy and the awareness that it affects all Americans. It includes radio and television public-service spots and a print-media campaign (posters, transit ads, and billboards—including print materials aimed at adults, teens, and young men in particular) which groups can sponsor in their communities.
- As the next major step in CDF's long-term adolescent pregnancy-prevention strategy, planning and developing an intensive, comprehensive, and long-range adolescent pregnancy-prevention demonstration effort in a small number of carefully selected sites. The CDF sites should be selected, after careful planning, by early 1988. The local-site effort will enable us to gain hands-on experience in identifying and testing local solutions to adolescent pregnancy that can inform our national and state policy-development work. The ultimate purpose of both our national and local efforts is to reduce the incidence of first and repeat teen pregnancies and births and their negative consequences, such as school dropouts, low-birth-weight babies, and high infant mortality.

The challenge facing school officers is to turn the two-pronged approach into a two-pronged action plan. We must do more to give all of our teens the information, counseling, and services they need to avoid pregnancy. The costs of not doing so are simply too high. Whether through mandates, incentive grants, technical assistance, or the lobbying of other state agencies on behalf of students, state and local educational adminstrations need to act to legitimize the schools' interest and activity in pregnancy prevention.

Equally important, our society must help at-risk children and youth fulfill the dream verbalized by the Detroit fifteen-year-old—to graduate from high school without becoming pregnant. For many of these youths, neither component of this dual action can be taken for granted.

Educators should continue to look at the needs of at-risk students, but must openly acknowledge that many of these students are in at-risk schools located in at-risk communities and are being marginally supported by other at-risk institutions. Completely individualizing the problem facing disadvantaged children and youths engages us in a round of "victim blaming" that we do not have time to play.

For school administrators and officials, the challenge is to draw upon community resources to create a more comprehensive system of supports for disadvantaged students with diverse needs. At minimum, this means making the best use of available education funds to strengthen the basic academic skills of youths at risk of falling behind in school or dropping out of school. Ideally, this also means becoming an advocate for poor and minority youths and using leadership positions within schools to identify problems or unmet needs within the community and to stimulate an adequate response.

The need—for greater community involvement in schools and for stronger advocacy on behalf of poor and minority youths within schools—is great. It is seldom easy to break out of narrowly defined roles, to take on new challenges, or seek out new opportunities and responsibilities when faced with more immediate demands. Yet the drive to combat teen pregnancy is a battle none of us—within the schools or in the community—can afford to lose. Schools cannot and should not take on this task alone. Nevertheless, pregnancy prevention and preparation for adulthood must go hand in hand, and schools, because of the pivotal role they play in the development of life options, will remain at the hub of these efforts for the foreseeable future. In many ways the question is not what schools can do, but who can help. Many organizations and individuals, public and private, can. It is time to insist on and accept their assistance.

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ENDNOTES

[1] National Center for Health Statistics, Annual Vital Statistics Volumes.

[2] Information on the earnings and employment of young men from 1973 to 1984 comes from analyses of the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by Cliff Johnson and Andrew Sum. See Children's Defense Fund, *Declining Earnings of Young Men: Their Relationship to Poverty, Teen Pregnancy, and Family Formation*. May 1987.

[3] Information on the relationship between basic skills levels, teenage parenthood, and poverty is based on analyses of the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Americans (NLS) conducted by Andrew Sum in conjunction with the Children's Defense Fund. See Children's Defense Fund. *Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy: What Schools Can Do*. September 1986.

[4] Unpublished analyses of the NLS by Andrew Sum, and analyses of data from the National Center of Health Statistics by the Children's Defense Fund.

[5] Unpublished analyses of the NLS.

[6] Unpublished estimates from Sheila Kamerman and Alfred Kahn of Columbia University, based on data from the U. S. Department of Education's Center for Statistics.

[7] Frank L. Mott and William Marsiglio, "Early Childbearing and Completion of High School," *Family Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 17, no. 5, September/October 1985, 234–237; and unpublished analyses of the *High School and Beyond* survey conducted by Samuel Peng of the U. S. Department of Education.

[8] Unpublished analyses of data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Americans (NLS) by Andrew Sum in conjunction with the Children's Defense Fund.

A PUBLIC/PRIVATE CAREERS SERVICE

Building a Network of Opportunity for the Majority of Our Young People

William J. Spring
VICE PRESIDENT
FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF BOSTON

INTRODUCTION

As part of the nation's educational-reform agenda, we need a new institution that will assure a successful transition from school to work for the nearly 55 percent of American young people who seek full-time work directly after their high-school years. This new institution—call it a Public/Private Careers Service—needs to be collaborative, a partnership between the business community and the schools. It should demonstrate to young people that job opportunities are available to those who perform in school. It should also engage business firms as organized participants in the community's effort to instruct and to provide an economic future for its young people.

The critical state of inner-city education is not news. Clearly, the *key* missing element is an educational strategy that will work citywide and will enable young people to master basic verbal and math skills, understand democratic values, and above all, develop confidence in their ability to reason and to pursue further learning. Growth in spirit, mastery of knowledge, and preparation for citizenship are more important purposes of education than is preparation for economic life. But despair about one's future does not contribute to the sense of security needed to pursue higher subjects. The isolation of many inner-city young people from any practical hope of access to the mainstream economy is a crucial element in their actual or psychological withdrawal from schooling.

In order to make the case for a new institution, this paper will describe our present difficulties and outline practical programs now in use in Europe, and in developmental stages in Boston and several other American cities. In conclusion, it will discuss the role of state education officials in furthering these efforts.

UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG MINORITY HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATES

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 50.3 percent of the black graduates of the high-school class of 1985 were unemployed the October after they earned their diplomas. For white graduates the unemployment rate was 14.9 percent; for Hispanics, 29.1 percent. White dropouts—members of the "shadow class" of 1985—did better than black graduates, with an unemployment rate of "only" 36 percent. To be counted among the unemployed by BLS it is necessary to be "in the labor force," that is, to have tried to find a job within the previous month. For young people, especially low-income young people who face discouraging conditions in the job market, a better measure is the share of the entire group that is employed, the employment/population ratio. For that same class of 1985 high-school graduates, 52 percent of the whites had jobs in October compared with only 28 percent of the black graduates (Table 1).

In an analysis of the value of a high-school degree to inner-city black high-school graduates in Philadelphia, Professor Bennett Harrison of MIT found no significant difference between the employment experiences of those who had graduated and those who had not (Harrison, 1972). If attending high-school class is deeply frustrating for many young people who read at below the eighth-grade level, and graduating is accurately perceived to have an uncertain payoff economically, is it surprising that inner-city high-school dropout rates are catastrophically high?

TABLE 1

School Enrollment and Labor Force Status of 1985 High-School Graduates in the United States, October 1985 By Race and Hispanic Origin

	All 1985 Graduates	*White*	*Black*	*Hispanic*
All 1985 Graduates (000)	2,666	2,241	333	141
Unemployment Rate (%)	19.8	14.9	50.3	29.1
Employment/Population Ratio (%)	48.5	52.5	28.5	n.a.
Enrolled in College (000)	1,539	1,332	141	72
Percent of 1985 Graduates	57.7	59.4	42.3	51.1
Unemployment Rate (%)	13.2	11.0	n.a.	n.a.
Employment/Population Ratio (%)	38.5	41.4	n.a.	n.a.
Not Enrolled in College (000)	1,127	909	192	69
Percent of 1985 Graduates	42.3	40.6	57.7	48.9
Unemployment Rate (%)	24.6	18.1	55.1	n.a.
Employment/Population Ratio (%)	62.0	68.8	34.4	n.a.

n.a.-not available. Data not shown where base is less than 75,000.

Note: Detail for the above groups will not add up to totals because data for the "other races" group are not presented and because Hispanics are included in both the white and the black population groups.

Source: Sharon R. Cohany, "What Happened to the High School Class of 1985?" *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1986, Table 1, p. 29.

Perhaps the most depressing statistics concern recent earnings of young black men. Professor Andrew Sum of Northeastern University has calculated that between 1959 and 1973, black males aged twenty to twenty-four saw their median earnings rise from $2,000 per year to $3,333 in constant 1967 dollars, to a level close to the poverty line for supporting a three-person family. But by 1984, their earnings had fallen *below* their 1959 levels. They earned only $1,854 in constant 1967 dollars (Sum, 1987). Between 1973 and 1984, the percentage of black males twenty to twenty-four years of age earning enough to support a three-member family at the three-person poverty line fell from 55.2 percent to 23.3 percent.

These numbers document the problems of young black males. One reason for the decline in marriages and thus the growing number of black babies born out of wedlock is the loss of earning ability among the fathers.

The numbers do not document a worsening of public education. In fact, during the years in question, black high-school attendance and graduation rates improved. Rather, the numbers underline the growing gap between young blacks and employment opportunities.

The problem of young people failing to make a connection with work and with stable adulthood is not limited to blacks, by any means. The Business Advisory Commission of the Education Commission of the States estimates that 2.37 million young Americans at high-school age are "disconnected." A total of 750,000 of them are black (Education Commission of the States, 1985).

BUSINESS INTEREST

It should come as no surprise that it was the Commission's Business Advisory Group who issued this report. Business leaders can read the demographic tables. They know that over the next decade the entry-level work force upon whom they depend will include more and more members of minority groups. Both as people who do business in the city and as concerned citizens, they know that the shift to a service economy requires all those who hope for decent pay and a secure economic role in their community to have mastered basic skills. Decently paid unskilled manufacturing work is following agricultural jobs into the history books. The choice is now clear: education or poverty. So now business leaders have added their voices to the long-time pleas of civil rights leaders that attention be paid to the plight of inner-city youth.

THE NATURE OF LABOR MARKETS AND THE CRISIS IN LOW-INCOME YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Why do low-income youth, especially minorities, have such a hard time in the job market? Whose responsibility is it to do something about it? What, if anything, can be done? And what, in all fairness, is the responsibility of inner-city public education systems already overburdened with noneducational responsibilities? Clearly the overall unemployment rate is crucial. If a city is facing 10 to 12 percent or higher rates of unemployment, inner-city youth, already at the back of the line, will be in very deep trouble. But why in even strong labor markets is minority youth unemployment so disastrously high?

A well-functioning market—the economists tell us—is characterized by the availability of good information about price and quality to both buyer and seller. The market for stocks and bonds, under the full-disclosure rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission, is a good example. Prices are available instantly by tape and daily in the newspapers. Brokers are paid well to explain those numbers to the uninitiated. Now imagine, for a moment, the market for stocks and bonds without the Stock Exchange and without reliable information. The insiders might survive with their portfolios intact, but how would the ordinary investor fare?

The market for jobs is an unorganized affair. It resembles a stock market with only curbside exchanges. In the job market—as in so many other markets—those who are already well positioned, the inside traders, have overwhelming advantages.

In the market for highly skilled professionals, say top-level state education officials, whom you know matters. If you were hiring a top staff member, you would rely on networks of contacts for critical information about available people and what they were "really" like. Credentials are important, but, among those who are roughly equal on paper, reliable, personal information is critically important. And so it goes for most fields and most well-paid executive or professional jobs. Word of mouth among people who know and trust each other makes the match between seeker and job.

Middle-class parents are the best job developers. They can make connections and vouch for their children. If things get sticky they can almost demand preferential hiring of their children from relatives, friends, and business contacts.

For low-income young people, white, black, or Hispanics of either race, such networks are simply not available. Whether they live in the mostly white D Street projects of South Boston or the Columbia Point public housing in Dorchester, their parents cannot help. And the old tradition of help from the ward boss no longer operates. So in the job market, where information is anything but free, the poor lose out.

And it gets worse. For in the youth labor market, there is not only a lack of accurate information, there are powerful *negative* stereotypes on both sides. Employers have read a good deal about ignorance, irresponsibility, and even violence among inner-city youth. And inner-city youth, especially minorities, have reciprocal negative stereotypes about downtown hiring practices. No wonder the youth labor market fails to function smoothly.

The difficulties of the youth labor market are compounded by the fact that the transition from being a student at school (hanging out with friends and living at home) to being a responsible adult (holding down a regular job and running your own home) is a major life change. A successful transition is not primarily a matter of knowledge. The problem is not teachers failing to tell students that, once on the job, 85 or even 90 percent attendance just is not good enough. Learning workplace behavior is a developmental process that takes time and experience, as well as information. Most middle-class youth go through a four-year transition period at college, and more than a few of them do not fully make the transition.

For children of poverty, isolation from the more prosperous world, lack of positive role models, and lack of opportunity for useful experience make the transition very difficult. For many young men the pressure to be part of the gang and its street life is all but irresistible. For these young people, organized information about and access to the job market, and an advocate to vouch for them, help them develop job contacts, and assist in the process of transition are of extraordinary value.

Given the need, can it be met at a reasonable cost? Who should bear the responsibility? Those looking for a mature system of public-private collaboration for the transition from school to work are generally directed toward West Germany.

THE WEST GERMAN SYSTEM

The West German system answers not only the question of the school-to-work transition for young people but also questions that we in the United States have not even begun to ask ourselves: Who is responsible for the job-skill training of new workers, and how is it best to organize that training for the long-range benefit of workers, firms, and the economy?

At the same time that it was enacting unemployment insurance and social security principles into law in the 1890s, Germany codified the basic elements of its Dual Apprenticeship System (Spring, 1987a). Now, in the painful period of slow economic growth in the 1980s, the principle is still accepted that the West German private sector is responsible for providing apprenticeships for all young people leaving secondary school who do not go on immediately to full-time secondary education. About 20 percent of each age group attends secondary school until age eighteen and then goes on to a university. Most young Germans complete high school at what for us would be the end of the tenth grade, and at that point about half of each age group moves directly into apprenticeships.

(The numbers are not that different in this country. If you include the "shadow class" of dropouts, about 55 percent of all American young people at age nineteen are not in school and are—or ought to be—available for full-time work. For inner-city young people, with 40 percent or more "dropping out," more than 65 percent do not go on immediately to further education.)

With a great deal of help from the West German Job Service, parents and employers, young people apply to firms for training jobs in one of some 450 skill areas. The apprenticeships last two to three years. Businesses pay not only wages—relatively low apprenticeship wages—but also the cost of skill training. One day a week the young people continue their academic learning at state-run vocational schools. In principle, the schools provide continual instruction in language and history as well as in the theoretical side of the trade.

The curriculum—for each of the 450 skills taught both in the school and in the firm—is agreed to in meticulous detail by business, government, and union representatives at the national level. Quality training is assured both by local chambers of commerce—with the same tripartite representation—and by the requirement that each apprentice pass an examination in his or her trade at the end of the training period. The exams are uniform across the country.

West German educators strongly defend the fairness of their system. One educational leader from Baden-Wurttemberg pointed out to me that the elaborate network for training institutions and night schools makes it possible for many who begin their lives as apprentices to move on up to universities. In fact, he said, about 30 percent of the students in technical universities in his state began as apprentices. And education, even university education, is tuition-free in Germany, making university success dependent only upon intellectual merit, in sharp contrast to our system, where even well-to-do parents must make a major sacrifice to send children to the best private universities.

However, for American observers the tracking procedures of the German system come as a shock. First, at age twelve or so, those judged suitable for university training are set apart in elite high schools. For all others, full-time high school is over at the end of tenth grade when they are sixteen. Can university potential be assessed at twelve years of age? Are sixteen-year-olds really in a position to assess their own choice of a professional field? Are not women, especially, likely to be shunted into "traditional" occupations? And is there not great danger of exploitation, in some sense, of those signing up for the less skilled vocations like baking or retail clerking?

On the other hand, there are some substantial advantages. First, from the nation's point of view, about 90 percent of each cohort of young Germans begins life after high school either enrolled in full-time further education or with a solid connection with the adult world of work. Apprentice status confers personal dignity upon them as individuals and, over the years of apprenticeship, integrates them solidly into the world of skilled adults. It is this argument that we heard most forcefully advanced by German business leaders to a Boston delegation on a German Marshall Fund–sponsored trip to Frankfurt in 1985. German businessmen believe that national productivity depends substantially on the skills mastered and the positive attitudes developed by young people through apprenticeship.

One of the explanations for the broad support that the dual system enjoys among business leaders—who pay substantially for training costs—is a vivid memory of the price Germany paid in the early 1930s when a generation of young people saw no economic hope in the existing order. Perhaps it is farfetched to compare the nationwide despair in Germany during the inflationary crisis of the late 1920s with the pockets of despair in America's inner cities. But it is certainly accurate to note that the pathology of the so-called "underclass" is to some extent based on a perception of the lack of economic opportunity.

Another advantage that deserves careful attention is the organized *participation in* as well as *support of* the private sector in the country's educational enterprise. The West Germans recognize that the introduction of young people to working life and the teaching of working skills is the common responsibility of school authorities and the business community. The schools are *not* asked to teach either job skills or proper on-the-job behavior. That is seen as a private-sector responsibility. On the other hand, the business community recognizes that academic instruction ought not to end in the student's fifteenth year, and so young people continue in school, at least a day a week, through their apprenticeships (Hamilton, 1987).

THE BRITISH YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME

For a generation following World War II, West Germans enjoyed full employment. We have known full employment only briefly, at the end of the 1960s. What relevance has the German public/private model to an economy with a high unemployment rate? In Prime Minister Thatcher's Britain, unemployment for those leaving school at sixteen might well stand at nearly 50 percent without government programs—the same rate faced by America's black high-school graduates. Britain launched a new program in 1983 to guarantee each "school leaver" a year of paid training in a private firm integrated with education at a college of continuing education, with government paying for both wages and instruction. The training is designed to lead to a certificate of skill attained. The program has now been extended to a two-year guarantee of work and learning (Manpower Services Commission, 1986).

THE CAREERS SERVICE AND THE BOSTON COMPACT

It is one thing to have a German or British example and it is another thing entirely to say that any version of such an arrangement might be workable—or even desirable—in the American context. In Boston, as part of the Boston Compact, a communitywide commitment to the improvement of public education, the school and business communities have joined to construct a school-based careers service. The results have been dramatic. In Boston, for the 1985 graduates, 62 percent of the white graduates had jobs in October, 10 points above the national rate; and fully 60 percent of the black graduates had jobs, 32 points above the national rate and nearly the same as for whites. And this was a class among which the overwhelming majority of young people came from poor homes and among which over 70 percent were black, Hispanic, or Asian (Table 3).

TABLE 2
Employment/Population Ratios for Class of 1985 in the October Following Graduation

	U.S.A.	*Boston*
Whites	52%	62%
Hispanics	43%	54%
Blacks	28%	60%

The data on Boston's results is available because as part of the Compact, a survey is conducted every year in the fall that reaches about 80 percent of the June graduates. The measure of the success of the Boston schools and of the

TABLE 3
Boston Public High School Graduates, Class of 1985
Employment and School Status Compared to U.S. Graduates

	1985 Boston Graduates					*Employment/Population Ratio*		
			Percentage of Those Surveyed					
	Total	*Surveyed October 1985*	*At School*	*School/ Work*	*At Work*	*Boston Graduates October 1985*	*U.S. Graduates October 1985*	*Central Cities March 1986*
Total	2,978	2,301	29	21	38	59	48	49
Black	1,437	1,125	25	19	41	60	28	34
White	913	721	29	21	41	62	52	62
Hispanic	323	239	30	22	32	54	43	40
Asian	283	207	51	34	13	47	n.a.	
Other	22	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	32

n.a. = not available

Note: Comparisons of Boston and U.S. data for October 1985 are of limited usefulness because 1) In the Boston Public Schools data the categories white, black, and Hispanic do not overlap. In the October 1985 data for the United States, Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups; 2) Boston data include those in the military (3 percent of the graduating class), while U.S. data are limited to the civilian noninstitutional labor force. In U.S. data for March 1986 for 82 central cities, the categories for whites, blacks, and Hispanics do not overlap.

Sources: The Boston Private Industry Council, Inc., *The Class of 1985: A Follow-Up Study, November 1985*, Tables 1, 4, and 13. Sharon R. Cohany, "What Happened to the High School Class of 1985?" *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1986, Table 1, p. 29. Current Population Survey data for March 1986 as analyzed by Professor Andrew Sum, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University.

TABLE 4

Boston Compact Jobs Programs
Number of Boston Public-School Students
Enrolled in the Boston Summer Jobs Program, 1982–1986

	Number Placed	*Number of Companies*	*Average Wage Per Hour*
1982	852	202	$3.86
1983	1,181	242	$4.00
1984	1,766	308	$4.14
1985	2,320	536	$4.55
1986	2,591	614	$4.94

Source: Boston Private Industry Council, 1987.

citywide effort to work with the school system is the fate of its young people (Boston Private Industry Council, 1985a). The survey is of critical importance to carrying out the key principle of the Boston Compact: the measurement of results.

COMPACT AGREEMENTS

The purpose of the Boston Compact effort is to make measurable improvement in the educational achievement of the city's public school students. There are now three parallel agreements: one between the city's schools and the business community, one between the schools and twenty-four area colleges and universities, and one with the Area Building Trades Council (AFL-CIO). Business is committed to increasing employment in summer, part-time jobs during the school year, and jobs upon graduation. Universities are committed to increasing the number of students going to college, and the unions to increasing the number of apprenticeships.

As agreed to by the Superintendent and the School Committee in the fall of 1982, the schools are committed to improving attendance rates, reducing the number of dropouts, and requiring competence in reading and math for graduation. Together with the business and university communities, the schools share responsibility for the goals of increased student success in finding jobs and in going on to further education.

The institutional innovations in the wake of the first Compact agreement included the following:

- The establishment of an educational foundation—The Boston Plan for Excellence in the Public Education—with some $9 million in endowment from major corporations. The fund makes grants to individual classroom teachers and sponsors a middle-school improvement program. It includes the ACCESS

TABLE 5

Number of Boston Public-School Students Enrolled in After-School Part-Time Compact Jobs Programs, 1982–86

	Number Placed
1982	274
1983	504
1984	1,046
1985	1,106
1986	1,200

Source: Boston Private Industry Council, 1986.

program, which provides financial and related counseling to prospective college students in the public high schools, and "last-dollar" scholarship assistance—averaging about $500 per year—to complement whatever financial assistance package a student is able to put together.

- A university assistance effort, including counseling students in high school and, especially, tracking them and helping them succeed once in college. Boston University, for one, has granted $6 million in full scholarships to Boston public-school graduates.
- Help from the Digital Equipment Corporation and IBM, with the result that Boston is now one of the top two or three school systems in the country in its computer/student ratio.
- A Public/Private Careers Service funded in part by the school system and operated by the Boston Private Industry Council.

THE BOSTON PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL'S CAREER SERVICE

Through the Careers Service, 967 Boston high-school graduates, about one-third of the graduates of the class of 1986, were placed in permanent full-time jobs at an average wage of $5.43 an hour (Boston Private Industry Council, 1986b). For three years, April follow-up surveys of the fall hirees have shown that fully 90 percent are still with the same firm—often with promotions—or have returned to full-time education (Boston Private Industry Council, 1986a).

The Compact jobs are not "fast-food" or other traditional youth jobs. A substantial number are in the banks, insurance companies, and medical facilities that represent the largest employers and the most rapid area of job growth in Boston. The size of the employer is important, for large American firms usually

TABLE 6

Number and Average Wage of Boston Public-School Graduates Hired Full-Time Through the Compact/Boston Private Industry Council, 1983–86

Class of 1983	415	$4.28
Class of 1984	607	$4.68
Class of 1985	823	$5.03
Class of 1986	967	$5.43

Source: Boston Private Industry Council, 1986.

have "internal labor markets." Once hired, a young person has a real chance for upward mobility, often with further college education paid for by the employers. A major change brought about by the Compact has been in the hiring patterns of these largest firms. Rather than hiring their noncollege personnel at age twenty-three or twenty-four, they are hiring young people directly out of high school. The wages reflect the fact that the jobs are of good quality. And the stability of young people on the job also reflects the jobs' value to the young people. In dead-end jobs young workers are notoriously unstable.

How have these results been achieved? First, private firms have organized to provide "priority hiring" for Boston high-school students. Some 779 firms in the city of Boston now participate in the summer jobs program. About 300 participate in the hiring of graduates. Second, the Careers Service provides a sequence of learning opportunities. With at least one summer of full-time employment and often an additional year of part-time work after school, many Boston high-school students have had time to develop their workplace skills. They have learned to be dependable workers.

CAREER SPECIALISTS

A new institution is being developed by the Boston Private Industry Council. Working with students in the high school, with high-school teachers and staff, and with those who hire for private sector firms, the career specialists provide coaching for the young people and a reliable "intermediary" for the community of employers (Spring, 1987b).

The career specialists work full-time year-round on the Private Industry Council payroll. About half of the costs of the program are paid by the School Department under a contract with the Council. The career specialists are hired jointly by the Council's youth director and the headmaster at the high school in which they will work. Their responsibilities include speaking in classrooms so that each student in the school knows of the availability of jobs; taking applications from interested students; coaching them in interview and resume-preparing techniques; arranging for interviews and for coaching not only on the first job but through a series of job experiences.

The career specialists have the responsibilty for finding specific jobs in the largest Boston firms where the CEO has "pledged" jobs: that means working with personnel officers and others to develop the most suitable assignments. But about half of the jobs are found in smaller firms cultivated by the career specialists, who search out jobs in want ads, by word of mouth, and by signs in windows, like any other job-seeker.

These are not guaranteed jobs. Each young person must convince the interviewing officer that he or she is worth hiring. And each student must decide to take the job. Boston business firms are asked to give Boston high-school students "priority" but to hire only young people they are convinced can do the job. It often takes five or six interviews before a match is made.

The career specialists are young professionals, sometimes former teachers. Occasionally they have worked in private-sector personnel offices. Their key characteristics are a commitment to young people, an ability to work in both the school and business worlds, and a respect for the necessities and the dynamics of the job market. They keep very careful records on each young person interviewed. Placement in part-time or summer jobs depends upon decent attendance (85 percent is the school system's legal minimum for passing courses) and the recommendation of two teachers. The specialists are very competitive with one another. Each Thursday afternoon the career specialists gather to hand in their weekly activity sheets, compare their performances, and swap job possibilities between schools. They are assigned specific targets for job placements—and are rewarded for success.

The career specialists are on the line for finding jobs because the private sector in Boston is publicly on the line for providing jobs. Each summer since 1981, the business community has raised its target for summer jobs, from 500 to 750 to 1,000 and now for 1987 to 2,800. The 1987 target for jobs for graduates is 1,000 placements. The job totals are an extremely serious matter among Boston businesses, because the provision of job opportunities is the business community's responsibility under the Boston Compact. And because success is so important to the career specialists, the performance of career specialists is very closely monitored by the responsible leaders at the Boston Private Industry Council.

THE BOSTON COMPACT AND THE YOUTH ACT OF 1980

The idea of uniting educational improvement and job opportunity efforts at the individual high-school level grew out of the Carter administration. Vice President Mondale led a Task Force on Youth Employment that developed a set of policies based on the experience gained from the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) passed in the summer of 1977. The Task Force developed statistical information, spoke with academic experts, held conferences, and set up round-table discussions in cities across the country with people working on youth education, training, and employment programs. The Task Force would gather around one table for a day's discussion of the major actors on the youth scene in a city: leadership from businesses large and small; education administrators and teachers in both high-school and vocational education; CETA directors; community-based organization leadership; and the Job Service. The school improvement literature was examined. In Washington—with a two-billion-dollar carrot—the Department of Labor and Department of Education (and vocational educational leadership) and their supporting organizations were drawn together in the design of the Youth Act of 1980. The proposed Act passed the House but stalled in the Senate during that election.

Title II of the Youth Act, the most innovative part, would have provided substantial federal funds—up to $700 per young person per year—to those schools willing to have their own teachers design the remedial programs and to agree to be held accountable for reaching measurable goals. Research showed that only teacher-designed reforms persisted after federal funding had run out.

Title I of the legislation—the Labor Department section—authorized a series of programs, growing directly out of the practical experience of YEDPA, designed to assure that all young people sixteen years of age and over would have an opportunity for rigorous educational work. It was assumed, to be honest, that much of that experience would need to be in public-sector jobs. But the legislation insisted on the primacy of mastering academic basics and so tied the job opportunity to learning in school, or alternative programs.

In 1981 several of the people who had been involved in the Vice President's Task Force effort found themselves in Boston working on the same set of issues. The experience of the Carter Administration convinced them that substantial progress in integrating job opportunities with educational reform was possible. Boston had been the site for one of the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects (YIEPP), under which part-time and summer jobs were guaranteed to low-income sixteen-year-olds who would stay in school or return to alternative sites. To run that program, the city (in charge of CETA) and the school staff had to develop close working relationships. So the work of Compact development began in Boston with a set of ideas, long experience in intersectoral consensus-building, and a substantial cadre of staff more committed to improvement of young people's lives than to institutional protection.

BOSTON BACKGROUND

Partnerships in Boston between high schools, businesses, and universities began more than a decade ago at the time of court-ordered desegregation. When business leaders asked headmasters in the mid-seventies what the private sector could do for the schools, they were usually told that earned income was a major need of their students. But the twenty-odd businesses first involved in the partnerships knew that they could not, by themselves, provide a significant number of jobs for roughly 12,000 young people over sixteen years of age in the high-school system. So the school-business partnerships concentrated on "quality education." Business assistance consisted of cash, staff time, and a complex variety of joint efforts designed to help school administrators financially and enable students to be in touch with the greater world outside the classroom.

In the fall of 1981, at a session of the Tri-Lateral Council on Quality Education, the organization set up to coordinate the business-school partnerships, some of the frustration over the decline of the public schools and the problems of our young people boiled over into a dispute between a deputy superintendent of schools and a bank vice-president. The deputy, a first-rate black educator, now superintendent of a school system, told the vice-president, "We know you send buses out to suburban schools to hire graduates, when you won't hire our students because they are black." The vice-president replied, "You know why we can't hire your students: Too many of them can't read."

In the spirited discussion that followed, the business leaders on the Council agreed that school graduates who could make the grade deserved a shot at jobs, and the school representatives agreed that the schools were responsible for turning out literate graduates. They both agreed that they shared joint responsibility for the success of education in Boston. They also agreed that the proper measure of success of the system was the success of the graduates in jobs and in college, rather than any such input measures as teacher-pupil ratio or even intermediate measures such as test scores. They agreed the following were two measures that might make sense as starting points: 90 percent of those beginning the freshman year should earn a degree, and 90 percent of the graduates should successfully make the transition from secondary education to work and/or further education.

The 90/90 goals, as they were called, were seen by all as simply a first cut at establishing easily understood measures of success. Even more important was the establishment of the principle of joint public responsibility to meet agreed-upon performance goals. Boston School Superintendent Robert R. Spillane readily agreed when told that a willingness to have his system's performance publicly measured by a few output goals might well lead to increased private sector support for himself and the school system. He also hired an expert—who had worked with Vice President Mondale's Task Force—to assess what the effort to reach 90/90 goals, in collaboration with university and business partners, would require within the school system.

THE ROLE OF THE CITY AND THE BOSTON PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

In his inaugural address to the city in 1980, newly re-elected Mayor Kevin H. White proposed a number of initiatives to ease racial tensions and provide access for minorities. One idea was that the city, the schools, and the business community work together to assure each high-school graduate a job. The city was already working closely with the newly formed Boston Private Industry Council and William S. Edgerly of the State Street Bank, whom the mayor had appointed as its founding chairman. Private Industry Councils were established by a 1978 amendment to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. In 1982 the PICs were made co-equal with the city in the design and implementation of training programs for the poor, under the Job Training Partnership Act. Edgerly gathered onto the PIC board leaders of the city's banking, insurance, and health industries as well as strong representatives of community-based organizations and the superintendent of schools. The board provided a forum in which the issues involved in putting together the Boston Compact could be discussed on a monthly basis.

If the willingness of the school system to be measured against goals was one of the keys to the establishment of the Compact, the other was the business community's confidence that it could, through the PIC, provide job opportunities to high-school graduates. It was not that unemployment was so low; the city's unemployment rate—now at 4 percent—was then standing at 9 percent. The confidence was primarily based on positive experience with two existing programs operated by the Boston Private Industry Council: a private sector summer jobs program and a school-to-work transition effort in two high schools.

Working closely with the schools and the Tri-Lateral business coordinators to recruit students, the Council operated an effective private-sector summer jobs program in the summer of 1981 for 500 young people.

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation was funding projects to help disadvantaged young people make the transition from school to work. Through the spring of 1981 BPIC staff held a long series of meetings with representatives of the city, the schools, community organizations, business groups, and school-assisting agencies. Out of these meetings of the "Jobs Collaborative" grew the basic outlines of the careers service. With a successful summer jobs program behind it, the PIC launched the new school-to-work transition program in the fall of 1981. Jamaica Plain and English high schools won the competition for the first career specialists. The school system's having had to lay off 25 percent of the teaching staff that summer (the first layoffs following the shrinking of the number of pupils from 90,000 to 60,000) provided a pool of applicants for the first jobs.

Business leaders learned several important new lessons from these programs. They learned that a significant total number of jobs could be provided with no one company making a sacrificial effort, if many businesses took part. They also learned that inner-city young people—at least those with pretty good attendance records—were good workers. About 90 percent were judged by their supervisors to be on a par with suburban young people hired on previous summer-job efforts.

The winter and spring of 1982 were spent hammering out agreements on the basic elements of the Boston Compact. It was a delicate process, especially the business community's commitment. Business leaders were very much aware of the difficulties that a "guaranteed-jobs" program represented. Yet it was essential that there be a citywide goal of enough jobs for all who sought work. It was decided that a citywide goal would be maintained but each firm would be free to decide for itself how many students the firm could hire. As the program succeeded, the citywide goal could be gradually raised. Both student and employer had the right to disagree about any particular job. The result has been a system of citywide goals, company pledges of priority access for high-school students, and voluntary choice on both sides in actual hiring.

One result of the success in reaching a *written* agreement for *measurable* progress in the schools, employment, and access to higher education has been an outpouring of support, especially business support, for the school system. As Edgerly said at a recent meeting, "We no longer regard education as someone else's problem." And because the business community has delivered on its jobs pledge, it is taken seriously at all levels within the school community, from students to classroom teachers, headmasters, deputy superintendents, and the superintendent himself.

The Boston school system has also made some progress toward its own Compact goals. Test scores are improved over their 1982 levels for all races and school classes, although there was a slight decline in the 1985-86 school year. Attendance has improved by 6.5 percentage points. Reading requirements for graduation were implemented in 1986 for the first time. However, the dropout problem remains very serious (Boston Public Schools, 1986). School Department data show that 43 percent of the class of 1985 dropped out of school between ninth grade and graduation, and over 46 percent of the class of 1986. While not an unusual rate for an American urban high school, a 46 percent dropout rate is disastrous and demonstrates that job opportunities alone are not enough to keep young people in school. This is particularly true for young people who are two or more years behind in reading, for whom the regular high-school curriculum is a prolonged exercise in frustration.

In the spring of 1986, with help from the Committee for Economic Development (CED), which sought occasions for community discussion of its report *Investing in Our Children*, a citywide conference was held on the school dropout issue with participation from City Hall, school, university, community, teacher, parent, and business representatives. The result was a serious communitywide focus on the dropout issue and the beginning of a program-development process which holds some promise.

As a result of that effort, Mayor Raymond Flynn and School Superintendent Laval Wilson have signed an agreement committing $2 million a year to a coordinated effort to reduce the dropout rate for those still in school and to double the number of seats available in alternative-education sites. The in-school part of the plan will expand to each of the district high schools a special program for those incoming freshmen, often more than half the class, who are substantially behind in reading. At one of the schools, Dorchester High School, the dropout rate among at-risk freshmen was cut to about one-half of the previous year's rate by the Compact Ventures effort (Boston Public Industry Council, 1986c). The key elements of the program are not complicated. They include clustering of young people, team teaching, extra time for teachers to work together on curriculum planning and the analysis of student progress, and counselors to work with both students and parents. Those close to dropping out of school receive immediate attention, as do their parents. In class the material is tailored to each student's progress. It remains to be seen if this success will continue as the program is expanded.

SUPERINTENDENT WILSON'S PLAN

In June of 1987 the School Committee approved, almost in its entirety, Superintendent Wilson's plan for the long-range improvement of public education in Boston, including a plan for "at-risk" young people. At the heart of the plan is a commitment to devote substantially more time to the tasks of mastering reading, writing, and math, especially for students who are below grade level.

The plan places substantial responsibility upon students to master the basics if they hope to be promoted, and upon teachers and school building administrators, whose performance will be measured by the achievement of their students. The plan also anticipates an increase in school planning and resources available for teacher training.

Wilson's initiative is complex, with over 500 specific recommendations in thirteen different areas. It was developed after asking literally thousands of participants in the Boston educational effort for their opinions and after working for over a year with hundreds of task forces in each of the issue areas.

THE CAREERS SERVICE, THE COMPACT, AND THE CHALLENGE TO STATE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

The improvement in inner-city education must focus on the relationship between teacher and student with, perhaps, a strategy for making low-income parents effective members of the instructional team. Judging from the Boston experience, some state-level initiative seems helpful.

MEASUREMENT

State departments of education are well placed to help school systems develop clear measures of *performance* that will be recognized by all participants as fair and accurate. We found in Boston that the accuracy and the methodology for developing not only dropout numbers, but simple attendance numbers, were widely in dispute. Reading and math performance measures are not certain things. Do you measure the *mastery* of grade-level material—which is understandable to ordinary citizens—or the student's *comparative* standing? Most important, public education systems ought to begin to take responsibility for keeping track of all students, at least through the fall after graduation, so that the results of the system can be accurately gauged. School systems might even consider joining with other youth-service organizations to keep track of all young people of school age. "We only do what we measure," W. Williard Wirtz used to say while he was Secretary of Labor. If we do not keep track of what happens to our young people, they may well assume it is because we do not really care.

REMEDIATION FOR ALL SCHOOL-AGE YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEED

Second, consider added resources for performance-based remediation efforts. Raising standards without carefully planned and very extensive remediation efforts is profoundly unfair to low-income students and to their teachers and school leaders. Consider the practice in Oregon which allows some share of a student's "average daily attendance" state aid funding to follow him or her to an alternative school, if the student drops out of a regular high school. Remediation requires a higher teacher-student ratio and more support staff. School districts—and alternative schools in cities that will support them—deserve additional resources for attempting to meet the challenge. One could do worse than look at the Carter Youth Act, legislation designed to provide a process for the development of local plans for remediation with federal (or state) dollars.

COLLABORATION FOR JOBS AND EDUCATION

Third, the state is in an admirable position to encourage, fund, monitor, and provide technical assistance for public-private collaborations that are serious in intent. In Massachusetts the administration has proposed an "Urban Education Partnership Act," based on the Boston Compact, and is already implementing a "Commonwealth Futures" program to assist in collaborative efforts to help dropouts. At a time when the federal government is less active on the scene, states have an opportunity to be the laboratories for educational development.

Any school-to-work transition program requires the active participation of the private sector. I believe that the career specialists—those who coach the students and find the jobs—will be more effective if they are on the payroll of an intermediary organization such as the Boston Private Industry Council. Chief state school officers, concerned about the employment prospects of low-income students, have an opportunity to forge collaborative ties at the state level, where the governor has responsibility across the realms of education, on the one hand, and employment and training, on the other.

TABLE 7

Boston Public Schools' Graduating-Class Cohorts
(Class of 1982—Class of 1985)
Percentage of Dropouts by Grade (9–12)[1]

	9th Grade	*10th Grade*	*11th Grade*	*12th Grade*	*Total*
Class of					
1982	6.8%	12.3%	10.6%	12.3%	36.2%
1983	7.1%	9.9%	14.0%	13.4%	38.0%
1984	6.2%	12.4%	15.9%	17.8%	40.7%
1985	7.0%	15.0%	21.1%[2]	18.3%	43.6%

Source: Boston Public Schools, Office of Research and Development, May 1985.

[1] The cohort analysis measures the high-school dropout rate by following a class from the time the students enter the 9th grade through graduation, plus a 13th year (to include those not promoted at some point during high school), and calculates the dropout rate based on the activities of that particular class.

[2] Through April 24, 1986.

WORKING YOUNG PEOPLE AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Finally, it is of crucial importance that young people who go directly from school to work understand that the educational system welcomes their return at any time: to universities, if students are willing to prepare themselves; to community college; to vocational and technical education; to Joint Apprenticeship programs; and even to proprietary schools. All of these are part of the American education and training system. But the system is in chaos, with no common data base and no statewide performance information. Elements view themselves only as competitive with one another and not as part of a common effort. There is no comprehensible structure for tying them to the private sector. As stated earlier, we have not really begun to think through a policy for encouraging continued learning among low-income wage earners. A lot is at stake. We have powerful economic incentives to begin now, and chief state school officers should be in the forefront of the initiative.

CONCLUSION

In March of 1968, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders issued its report. "This is our basic conclusion," it said. "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal. . . . Within two decades, this division could be so deep that it would be almost impossible to unite: a white society principally located in suburbs, in smaller central cities, and in the peripheral parts of large central cities; and a Negro society largely concentrated within large central cities."

The Commission saw two key dangers: "sustained violence" in our cities and "a conclusive repudiation of the traditional American ideals . . . they may still recite the 'Pledge of Allegiance' and say 'One nation, indivisible.' But they will be learning cynicism, not patriotism" (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968).

Even taking into account the rhetorical conventions of the report writer, who hopes to compel action by adjective, these words have a painful resonance. The welcome economic success of black college graduates blunts the Commission's prophecy of a purely racial division between the haves and have-nots. As the report on Disconnected Youth documents, most at-risk young people are white. But still, the condition of black inner-city America is desperate. Rampant inner-city youth crime is a kind of rolling riot, lower in intensity, perhaps, but more grievous in consequence than the urban explosions of 1965–1967. And what is the talk of the black "underclass" but another way of describing the "other society" the Kerner Commission predicted?

Education and access to economic opportunity are the best policies to overcome the shadow of ghetto life in the cities. Clearly, education comes first. The public schools are the one institution to which all come with hope, at least at the beginning. The educational techniques needed to build from that hope to a reality of well-educated young adults are primarily the responsibilities of professionals. If professionals were confident that they knew what worked, resources would not be lacking. It is ironic that with such broad agreement about what makes a good school, from Goodlad to Sizer, from Comer to Lightfoot, there is no urban school district in the country where these principles are widely applied. Perhaps more attention needs to be paid to the structure of public institutions, where the very bureaucratic elements intended to help achieve the goal are seen as a great obstacle to progress. Perhaps, in our sharp focus on attaining college status for as many of our young people as possible, we have neglected, particularly in high school, those who, for whatever reason, learn more slowly than the national norms anticipate. The price we pay for that neglect is evident in the dropout rates and in the withdrawn faces of those who stay but fail to learn.

The chief point I wish to make is this: the distance from the inner city to the economic mainstream is too great for many young high-school students to leap on their own. They lack the parental connections, the cultural assurance, and the expectation of welcome that make the transition seem a natural development for the children of the middle class. There is no other plausible explanation for a 50 percent unemployment rate among black high-school graduates. To overcome institutional racism we need to build institutions of integration. Other nations, as a matter of course, structure the school-to-work transition for all noncollege young people. For the 55 percent of our youth who do not go to college, we have made little provision. By structuring a bridge between school and work, economic opportunity *can* be opened up to inner-city young people in most cities. That is the meaning of the Boston evidence, which shows nearly equal employment/population ratios for white and black high-school graduates.

TABLE 8

The Cumulative Dropout Percentage Rate by Race for Boston Public Schools' Graduating Classes 1982–1985

Graduating Class	*Total*	*Black*	*White*	*Asian*	*Hispanic*
1985	43.0%	44.3%	42.1%	26.5%	51.9%
1984	40.7%	40.7%	39.7%	19.4%	48.2%
1983	38.0%	40.2%	36.4%	17.7%	41.0%
1982	36.2%	35.2%	37.1%	14.4%	42.6%

Source: Boston Public Schools, 1986.

An institution that bridges school and work need not be yet another noneducational burden upon the schools. In fact, it ought to be the joint responsibility of the schools and the private-sector community, carried out through an intermediary organization such as the Private Industry Council or Jobs for America's Graduates. But it must be tied directly to the schools, so that highly skeptical inner-city young people can be shown that hard work at school will pay off.

The Kerner Commission, as a matter of fact, recommended for expansion the cooperative-education program, where students receive release time from school for on-the-job training opportunities in the private sector. It is interesting to note that the CED report on "Investing in Our Children" repeats the recommendation almost twenty years later. But the cooperative-education model works on a very small scale. What is needed is a comprehensive, citywide structure that offers a sequence of employment opportunities for those over sixteen and, for graduates, access to jobs with a future.

Once a partnership that links performance in school to economic opportunity is in place, the school system has gained a serious ally in its struggle for improved education. Not only the students who receive job experience but the whole system gains. The concepts that informed the Boston Compact can be of use elsewhere: agreed-upon goals; measurable results; school-based planning; university commitments to participate; and the building of an institution to link school to work. As of summer 1987, seven cities, under the leadership of the National Alliance of Business, and assisted by a small grant from the Department of Health and Human Services and help from the Department of Labor, are attempting to develop city compacts of their own.

Chief state school officers might well consider the link between education and jobs not as another extraordinary and perhaps impossible demand upon already failing urban school systems, but rather as a bridge of opportunity that can draw the business community and the school together in a structure of mutual responsibility on behalf of young people who otherwise may well continue in their isolation from the economic mainstream.

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EXHIBITS

Exhibits 1 and 2 present the Metropolitan Achievement Reading and Math Scores of Boston Public School students, grades 1–12, for the years 1986 and 1987.

Exhibit 3 shows the 1987 remediation needs in math and reading according to the percentage of students scoring at or below the 40th percentile.

Exhibit 4 gives city and school-system population figures for Boston, broken down by race, and information on the organization of the Boston Public School System.

Exhibit 5 presents college and university enrollment patterns of Boston Public Schools.

EXHIBIT 1
METROPOLITAN READING SCORES:
1986 VERSUS 1987 MEDIAN PERCENTILES BY GRADE

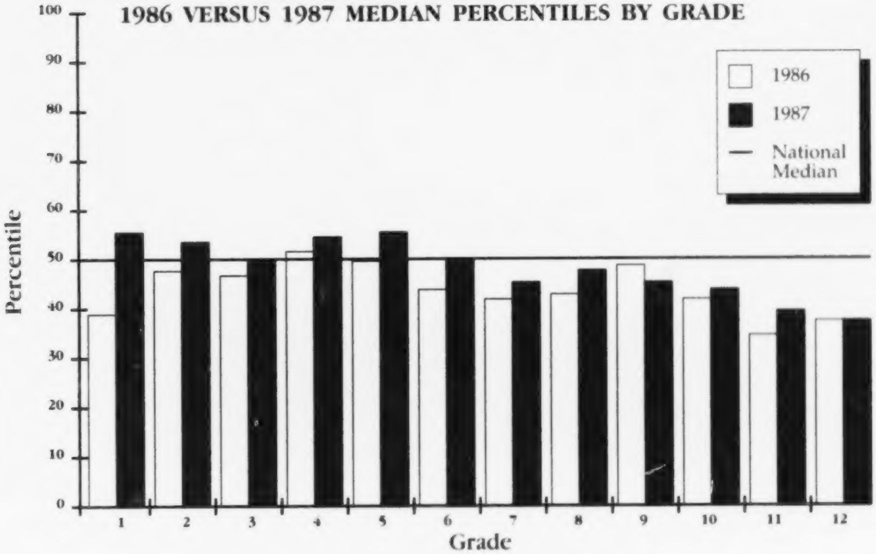
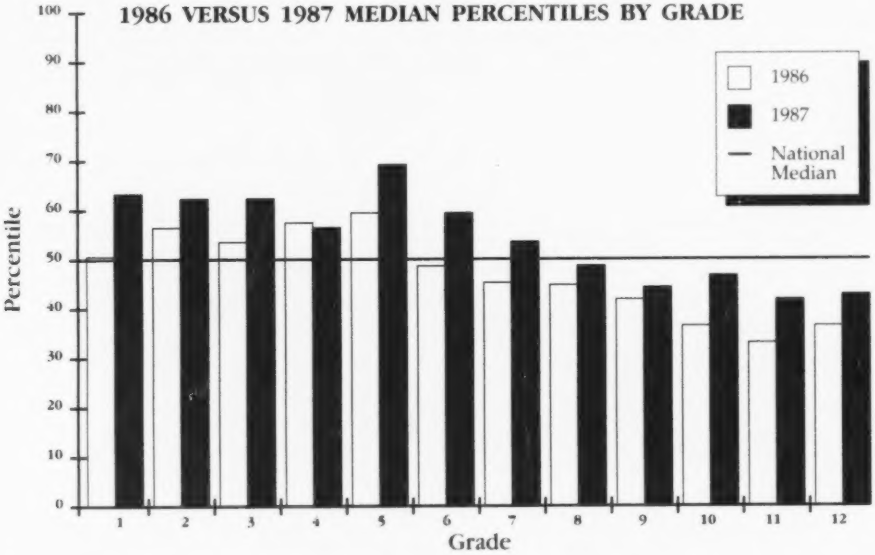


EXHIBIT 2
METROPOLITAN MATHEMATICS SCORES:
1986 VERSUS 1987 MEDIAN PERCENTILES BY GRADE

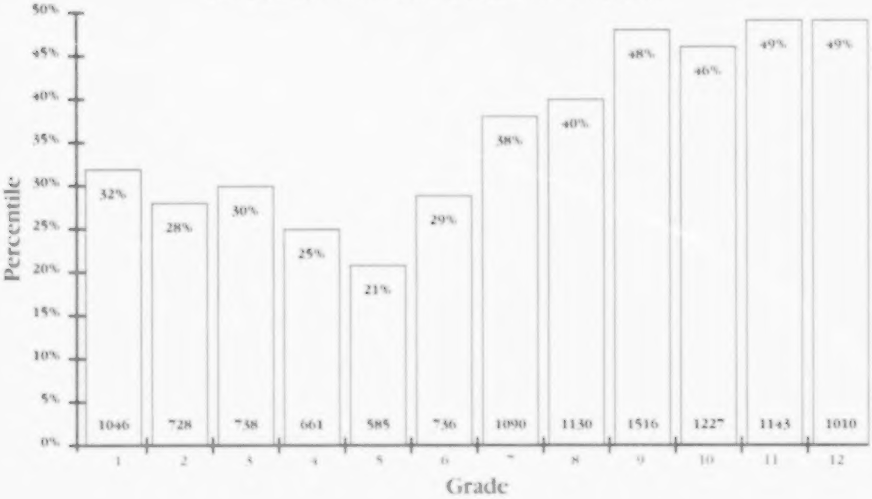


Source: Office of Research and Development, Boston Public Schools, Mimeograph, May 1987.

EXHIBIT 3

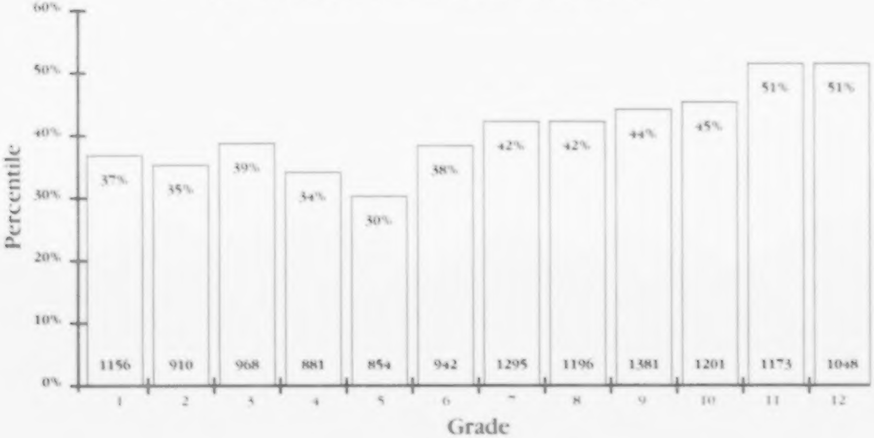
1987 REMEDIATION NEEDS (MAT6 MATHEMATICS)

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING AT OR BELOW THE 40TH PERCENTILE



1987 REMEDIATION NEEDS (MAT6 READING)

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING AT OR BELOW THE 40TH PERCENTILE



Source: Office of Research and Development, Boston Public Schools, Mimeograph, May 1987.

EXHIBIT 4

Boston Demographics	Population	562,994
	White	70.0%
	Black	22.4%
	Other Minority	7.6%
School System 1984–1985	Population	55,424
	White	27.4%
	Black	47.7%
	Asian	7.8%
	Hispanic	16.6%
	NA	0.5%
Organization	5 Districts:	
	4 Geographic Districts	
	1 District composed of Citywide Magnet Schools	
	Secondary Schools:	
	Exam Schools	3
	Magnet Schools	5
	District Schools	9

Source: Boston Private Industry Council, 1987.

EXHIBIT 5
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT PATTERNS OF BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS[1]

Enrollment

- 926 BPS graduates enrolled in the colleges in 1985.
- This was a 3% increase in BPS graduate enrollment from 1984.
- Among eleven private colleges, BPS graduate enrollment declined 3.5% from 1984–1985.
- The percentage of non-whites in the cohorts has increased from 48% in 1984 to 65% in 1985.
- Blacks and Hispanics are enrolled at a lower rate than is their percentage of the BPS graduating classes.
- The percentage of black students increased in the public colleges but slightly decreased in the private colleges from 1984 to 1985.
- The feeder patterns between particular high schools and colleges have remained stable over the three years.

Retention

- In Cohort One (1983 freshmen), 81.6% enrolled in the spring of the first year, 58.6% enrolled in the spring of the second year, and 38.1% enrolled in the spring of the third year.
- In Cohort Two (1984 freshmen), retention patterns are slightly higher, with 88.8% enrolled in the spring of the first year and 61.4% enrolled in the spring of the second year.
- In Cohort Three (1985 freshmen), 83.0% enrolled in the spring of the first year, a lower rate than that of the previous year.
- Private colleges have slightly higher retention rates than public colleges.
- BPS exam school graduates have higher college retention rates than do non-exam school graduates.
- In each cohort financial aid has a stronger association with retention at public colleges than at private colleges.
- Asian-Americans have the highest retention rates, whites the second, and blacks the third, with Hispanic rates unstable because of the small numbers enrolled.
- Financial aid is dramatically associated with black student retention; in the last two cohorts, close to 90% of aided black students enrolled in the spring of the first year, compared to only 55% of black students without aid.

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[1] Langer, Peter. "Patterns of Enrollment: The College Enrollment and Retention of Boston Public School Graduates." The Fenway Retention Consortium, Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts, 1986. Sixteen Boston-area colleges and universities ("colleges") provided data on graduates of Boston Public Schools ("BPS") who had enrolled as freshmen from 1983 to 1985. Retention refers to enrollment at the college of original entry.

1987 CCSSO SUMMER INSTITUTE

Summary and Discussion

INTRODUCTION

In August 1987, nearly forty chief state school officers came together in Whitefish, Montana, to hear oral presentations of the twelve papers published in this book and to discuss with the presenters and among themselves the topic: children at risk in the educational system.

Because of time constraints, the experts had to cull out and highlight the portions of their papers that they thought were most important for the chiefs to hear and discuss. As the five days of discussion progressed, certain themes emerged repeatedly and were confirmed and embellished.

The Council felt it would be worthwhile to share a brief summary of some of the overarching ideas and assumptions that emerged from the presentations, as well as the questions and ideas they stimulated in the discussion sessions. This chapter will attempt to summarize the rich presentations by some of the nation's foremost authorities on children at risk, and the cumulative insights that occurred among the more than fifty persons who devoted their week to the topic.

This chapter is divided into two major parts—a summary of the presentations and a summary of the discussions. The first part is organized into the three main sections used to group the papers: context, barriers to serving at-risk children, and strategies. An additional section, which focuses on the presenters' recommendations to the chiefs, has been added. The second part of the chapter reflects the themes that stimulated the most discussion at the Institute.

Although these projects are not summarized in this section, it should be noted that three specific programs designed to address the needs of at-risk children were described in detail by presenters and were the subject of numerous questions by the audience. The descriptions can be found in the earlier chapters of this book. The projects are the Boston Compact, presented in William Spring's paper; the Yale Child Study Center School Development Program, described in James Comer's paper, and the "accelerated schools" concept, outlined in Henry M. Levin's paper.

SUMMER INSTITUTE SUMMARY

SETTING THE CONTEXT

> *"The inner city . . . is undergoing a remarkable social transformation."*
>
> WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON

Historical Perspective

The cultural, ethnic, racial, and language diversity of Americans has always posed a challenge to the educational system. Several presenters drew on both historical and personal experience to illuminate the variety of these factors and their historical evolution.

Comer, a psychiatrist who has worked extensively with black children, stressed the difference in experiences between blacks who came to the United States from Africa and lived in slavery, and immigrants from other parts of the world. "Most American immigrants were able to maintain cultural continuity . . . to use their same language and practice their same religion. . . . Many came from the same place in the old country and settled in significant numbers in the same place in the new country." They were also able to vote almost immediately. They were thus able to achieve political, social, and economic power in one generation, Comer pointed out.

By contrast, blacks who came from Africa and lived under slavery were denied what Comer described as "the three most important components of mental health": the right to maintain their institutions, control over their own personal and daily lives, and the prospect of a future. Lacking the right to vote, they could not gain social, political, and economic power; and as a result of legal segregation, they were also "massively undereducated." Comer observed that "despite these conditions, most black families functioned reasonably well into the 1950s," living in small, often rural communities where most families were intact and where the church and other local institutions provided support while children were growing up.

The importance of a supportive community for the development of all children was underscored by several presenters, including Asa G. Hilliard, III, Professor of Urban Education at Georgia State University in Atlanta. "I don't believe that individual parents raise children," he declared. "It's too much of a job. . . . They raise them in collaboration with the community." Hilliard was one of three presenters—the others were Marian Wright Edelman, President of the Children's Defense Fund, and Comer—who described their own childhood in cohesive black communities where even if families were not intact, other relatives, neighbors, and institutions all contributed to their sense of security and being cared for.

Comer and others described the post-World War II milieu and chronicled the trends that have culminated in the high rates of family breakup and the creation of inner-city black ghettos in recent decades. The black community began to experience increased levels of difficulty, he pointed out, due to denial of equal education and job opportunities, coupled with the migration of many from the rural South to the North after World War II. "As a result of all of these conditions, many families that once functioned well began to function less well after the 1950s," he said.

Even families that remained intact were undermined by the realities of discrimination. "Undereducated in prior years, blacks were the first to experience exclusion because of raised educational standards," he said. Because of racism, he pointed out, "even well-educated blacks were denied adequate jobs and other economic opportunities."

The nation's inner cities have increasingly become the home of the nation's poor and minority families, reported Kathryn M. Neckerman and University of Chicago sociologist William Julius Wilson. Although the total population of the ten largest cities declined from 1970 to 1980, the number of persons in poverty increased an average of 19 percent, he said. In the country's poorest census tracts (where more than 40 percent of residents are in poverty) the number of Hispanics increased threefold from 1970 to 1980; the number of blacks, 104 percent; and the number of whites, 44 percent.

A parallel trend that has direct implications for the educational system is the increase in the number of children living in poverty, pointed out Edelman. The poverty rate for children rose from 13.8 to 16 percent between 1969 and 1979. Of the nation's four- and five-year-olds, she summarized:

- one in four is poor;
- one in three is nonwhite or Hispanic, of whom two in five are poor;
- one in five is at risk of becoming a teen parent; and
- one in six lives in a family where neither parent has a job.

Complementing the data, several presenters emphasized that the numbers do not tell the whole story. Pointing to the increase in births to unmarried teenagers, Edelman cited the decline in earnings of young men—especially blacks—as a deterrent to the establishment of stable families with adequate resources to raise their children.

This phenomenon is one aspect of a broad social transformation that, Wilson explained, is occurring in inner cities—a transformation characterized at its worst by the exodus of middle- and working-class families of all races and the collapse of social institutions. With the loss of "the social buffer"—churches, schools, banks, jobs, and other neighborhood institutions—"access to traditional areas of mobility" declines, and children lose both the role models and the institutions that they require for support and the offer of a beacon of hope.

Patricia Albjerg Graham, Dean of the Faculty of Education at Harvard University, outlined parallel trends that have also influenced society's attitude toward children and their role in society. These include the decrease in the age of menarche from an average of sixteen years in the mid-nineteenth century to twelve and a half years today; the development of regulation of child labor; and urbanization and industrialization.

The effect, she pointed out, was to increase the number of years children spend in school, creating what she called "a recipe for administrative difficulties," because "the concentration of pubescent youth in one setting . . . flew in the face of biological realities." The emergence of the "adolescent peer culture" and the concomitant burgeoning of consumerism have added to the difficulties by creating a demand for teenagers to have money to buy the clothing, cars, and other goods that advertising campaigns tell them are "necessary," she added.

Implications of Demographic and Social Trends

The result of the trends discussed above is what University of Chicago political scientist Gary Orfield calls "a society profoundly fragmented by race and income." Orfield drew a stark verbal picture of the environment ghetto youngsters encounter in school, compared with the one encountered by students in more affluent suburban communities. He used two hypothetical schools—Chavez, in the inner city, and Richville, in a suburb, to describe the disparities.

Families of the youngsters at both schools "have very similar dreams for their children and both view the schools as centrally important," he explained, but the realities of daily life in the neighborhood and the school are vastly different. Parents of youngsters at the suburban school focus their concerns on getting their children into prestigious colleges, while parents of children at Chavez "are desperately worried that their kids finish [school] at all." Use of drugs and alcohol, and premature sex, are of concern to families whose youngsters attend the suburban school, but inner-city parents confront not only these concerns but also daily realities such as the death of a youngster at the hands of a gang. Chavez is old, has 3,000 students in a building meant to hold 1,800, is staffed by teachers with less training at institutions less prestigious than those attended by teachers at Richville, and has fewer counselors (although at Richville, "the students already have the most information about college"), and its students are offered a less-demanding curriculum and have no access to advanced-placement training.

Hernan LaFontaine, Superintendent of Schools in Hartford, Connecticut, and a leader in the bilingual-education movement, focused on the special characteristics and needs of immigrant and other limited-English-proficient (LEP) children. Stressing the immense diversity of the children in American schools today, LaFontaine said it isn't enough for educators to recognize only cultural factors that influence the attitudes and behavior that immigrant youngsters bring to school. They must also realize that for many the experience of war, loss of family members, and, in some cases, a total lack of previous formal education require special understanding and attention. In addition to these cultural and personal differences, many youngsters with limited English proficiency, he said, face the same disadvantages as other minority and poor children: attendance at ghetto schools with limited resources, health problems, lack of adequate housing, high unemployment in their families, etc.

The segregation and social isolation of minority, poor, and immigrant children seriously restrict their access to jobs, several speakers pointed out. Wilson noted that both the youngsters in the ghetto and those in poor rural areas may become so accustomed to an environment of joblessness and welfare that getting a good job and going to work every day is not even seen as an option or goal.

Graham cited a 1922 study by George Counts that found "parental occupation to be a prime predictor of children's high-school graduation." And Spring, Vice President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, noted that for middle-class children, parents serve as a "job network." "Middle-class parents are the best job developers. They can make the connections and vouch for their children. If things get sticky, they can almost demand preferential hiring of their children from relatives, friends, and business contacts." He cited Bureau of Labor Statistics data showing that 50.3 percent of the black high-school class of 1985 were unemployed the October after they earned their diplomas—compared with 14.9 percent of white graduates and 29.1 percent of Hispanic graduates.

Toward a Definition of "At-Risk"

What does it mean for a child to be "at-risk" in the educational system?

Hilliard said that although he was never identified as such at the time, he was an at-risk child because he came from a "broken home" (his mother was divorced); lived in "a ghetto"; his family was poor and received welfare payments; and he was a "latchkey child" when his mother was working. What made it possible for him and others to overcome such risks and succeed in the educational system was the existence of a caring, relatively stable community where teachers, ministers, Boy Scout leaders, and neighbors all contributed to the process of nurturing the children.

Comer described how his neighborhood and family contributed to a supportive educational environment. His parents placed responsibility on school officials and raised expectations for success when they "told the school the Comer brothers were expected to achieve," he recounted. In addition, "There was a real sense of community and the school was part of that. Our family went to shop at the A&P on Friday night and always met a teacher or the principal or the school custodian" and had a chat about what was happening in school.

How are social factors translated into educational risk? How is the lack of the supportive social environment described by Comer and others reflected in a youngster's attitude and performance in school? In an adjunct presentation to the chiefs on educational technology, Vermont Chief State School Officer

Stephen S. Kaagan listed what the Association for Instructional Technology (AIT) has defined as the characteristics of children at risk in the classroom:

1. Low motivation (whether from hopelessness, lack of role models, hunger, or other social conditions)
2. Major difficulties in fluency (e.g., having to count on their fingers, as opposed to responding automatically when asked "How much is six plus two?" or the like)
3. Lack of contextual background ("You can't discuss World War II without knowing some geography.")
4. Scarcity of opportunities for successful performance

Hernan LaFontaine pointed out that children from immigrant families may present other characteristics when they arrive at school: in addition to not speaking English, they may live according to different cultural standards and may have experienced war or other traumas that affect their ability to communicate and function in a "typical" American school. Inability of the school staff to understand and respond to these types of characteristics places poor and minority children at even greater risk, several participants suggested.

Another school practice that can decrease students' prospects for success is the refusal to discuss issues that are vitally important to the students, observed Michelle Fine. Among the issues that, she feels, need to be confronted are concerns about racial differences and discrimination, the realistic employment prospects of students who drop out, and the impact of drug abuse on the students and the educational process.

Referring to "cynicism and despair at the building level," William Spring was one of several participants who suggested that among the most important factors in defining risk are the low expectations and lack of will and commitment on the part of personnel in schools with large numbers of poor and minority students.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVELY SERVING AT-RISK STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS

> *"We bought the notion that . . . ability was the main factor in how children do in school . . ."*
>
> Patricia A. Graham

In his keynote address to the Summer Institute, Frank Macchiarola, former Chancellor of the New York City Public Schools and President of the New York Partnership, admonished the chiefs "not to define the problems of schools in terms of the children." He urged them to view the school as "a community . . . where people really care," to acknowledge that "in our society family values do not exist and aren't carrying the day," and to look beyond the constraints of bureaucracy and tradition to mold an educational system that responds to the needs of all children.

Beyond the historical, demographic, and social factors already described, what is it about the educational system and educators that constitutes a barrier to serving at-risk students effectively? A number of presenters addressed this issue.

Fine, Associate Professor of Psychology in Education at the University of Pennsylvania, spent four days a week in a South Bronx high school in 1981–82 to observe the daily routine and interview students, teachers, and parents about the school experience. She found what she calls "institutionalized inequity." She explained, "The structuring of inequity is so basic" that the programs which do not retain students are suspected of having poor standards; tests that don't discriminate are considered invalid; classrooms in which all can achieve are disparaged as illusion producing; adolescents who value family or group over self are considered unmotivated . . ."

Fine interviewed dropouts from the school and discovered, to her surprise, that they were not "losers." Compared with their counterparts who stayed in school, she said, they reflected more enthusiasm about their future and control over their lives. This changed, however, as the dropouts tried to make a go of it and found that lack of education, among other things, limited their career and life options.

Fine also said she encountered taboos against discussing problems of dropouts, criticizing the educational system, and addressing issues of concern to children (e.g., racial discrimination) in the classroom. These taboos have contributed to what she considers the failure of many schools to serve at-risk children.

"Pullouts"—the practice in which youngsters are removed from their regular class for separate instruction because of low performance or special needs—were cited by several speakers as a barrier to serving students effectively. Henry M. Levin, Director of the Center for Educational Research at Stanford University, said that often the pullout becomes a permanent, accepted strategy instead of a transitional method of helping the child return to regular classroom work, and that both expectations for the child and the child's academic performance suffer.

Another practice cited as a barrier to success for at-risk students is grade retention. Orfield cited a study which found that most dropouts were at least two grades behind and 84 percent were at least one year overage in comparison with their peers. He suggested that "the most direct way to increase dropouts late in a high-school career is to create an additional obstacle to degree attainment." For example, he said, addition of achievement tests to other graduation requirements "will disproportionately hurt those groups that have already faced problems in schools."

Graham cited educators' attitudes as a barrier to success with at-risk children. Responding to discussions of studies in which Asian children outpace United States youngsters on mathematics achievement tests, Graham said, "We bought the notion that . . . ability was the main factor in how children do in school, unlike the Japanese," who stress hard work and effort as the keys to success.

Educators must also abandon the notion that additional research is the answer to improving the education of children at risk, several speakers said. "No new research is needed to solve our problems," argued Hilliard. "The last thing I want to think is, You've got to wait until we do a Manhattan project and the answers are about twelve years down the road." At-risk youngsters lose opportunities for success because educators have a limited view of youngsters' abilities. This limited view is reflected in setting "minimum competency" and "basic skills"—rather than "maximum competency"—as the goals of education. According to Hilliard, "The vast majority of at-risk children are capable of succeeding in the college-preparatory program of the public school . . . [and] they do not need anything special in the way of pedagogy."

Graham agreed with Hilliard that the results of research which confirm such facts have not percolated down to teachers and that many promising models in the United States and other parts of the world are not drawn upon. She said that, in general, educators have resisted public-policy changes, including the Morrill Act, which created the land-grant university system; the G.I. Bill; and other laws that improved the quality of education and access to it. "Where were the educators [who should have been] pushing for *Brown v. Board of Education* . . . for Title I [the federal program for education of disadvantaged children]?" she asked. "It was the politicians who were pushing."

PROMISING STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

"It's education or poverty. There are no alternatives."
WILLIAM SPRING

Several speakers advocated broad strategies of social and economic reform—including "comprehensive" approaches that address problems of housing, health, social services, and transportation for children at risk and their families. This section of the summary will attempt to reflect the suggested strategies that relate most specifically to educators and the educational system. The potential role of chief state school officers as community and political leaders will be discussed in the final portion of this section, "What Chiefs Can Do."

Desegregation

Orfield pointed out that there is an "extremely strong relationship . . . between segregation by race and income and educational experiences" and called for the development of plans to alleviate the segregation of black students and what appears to be the increasing segregation of Hispanic students. There is a special need, he said, for attention to minority students "who have the potential to learn at grade level but find themselves in schools and classes operating far below those levels."

Educators must keep in mind, Orfield emphasized, that when the same educational policy is applied "to totally different realities" such as those in the two schools he described, it will have disparate effects. Imposition of higher competency standards on a ghetto school that already lacks basic resources will only produce more failure, he suggested.

The Early Years

Early-childhood education and day care—greater access and better quality—was reiterated by numerous speakers as a strategy for reducing the number of at-risk children in the educational system. "The goal should be to meet the developmental needs of children and also to confront the needs of parents," recommended Edelman. "The children of welfare mothers are the very children we want to keep off welfare in fifteen years," she pointed out.

Comer explained that most children are born into families with "adequate education, adequate income, and adequate childrearing skills." These youngsters arrive at school with prereading skills and the "inner control, direction, motivation . . . and acceptance of responsibility for their own behavior and academic growth," but, he pointed out, poor and minority children who live in the ghetto often do not. Early childhood education can assist the ghetto child, the child of a teenager, and the poor child to make up for these disadvantages of birth, he said. Comer emphasized, however, that "you cannot stop" with early-childhood education because children at risk may continue to require special attention throughout junior high and high school.

Edelman pointed out that because youngsters who test in the lowest percentiles on basic skills are more likely to become pregnant, the schools must address the issue of teenage pregnancy prevention. She cited a study which showed that pregnant girls from advantaged backgrounds were only four to eight percentage points more likely than their peers to drop out of school, while pregnant girls from disadvantaged backgrounds were 34 to 39 percent more likely to do so. A focus on educating children at risk can assist in the teenage-pregnancy prevention effort, she said, but schools should also respond to the special needs of young mothers—including child-care and health services—to discourage them from dropping out.

Extending Educational Time

Drawing on an analysis of results of education research, Herbert J. Walberg, Research Professor of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, urged the chiefs to "focus on increasing the time of education for children at risk." He differentiated between "extending" educational time and "supplanting it" by removing youngsters from the classroom for special instruction during the regular school day.

He proposed a number of strategies, including preschool, summer school, and what he called "the curriculum of the home." The last concept encompasses both activities shared by parent and child—such as reading or learning a skill—and "quasi-academic" activities for the child, including "constructive leisure such as watching educational television or hobbies such as learning to play a musical instrument or to play chess."

Several speakers spoke of the importance of reaching out to parents to involve them in the educational process. "The most powerful thing we can do is to stimulate and enhance the capacity of parents and communities to take their own leadership roles," said Hilliard. He stressed, however, that "it is not true that academic achievement is tied to parental involvement," and that in depressed communities where children are at severe risk, "we have the power to make changes even if we can't bring the parents into the situation."

Education and Jobs

Focusing on the goal of preparing youngsters for meaningful jobs, Spring recounted the emphasis in the Boston Compact on placing students in part-time jobs and making retention of the job conditional on the student's participation in a school program in which the curriculum is directly related to the employment. He summarized the message the project hopes to convey to at-risk youngsters: "It's education or poverty. There are no alternatives."

Bolstering expectations that teenaged mothers, poor and minority youngsters, and other at-risk children can achieve in the educational system was a major strategy recommended by many of the speakers. They contended that success depends on the ability of both educators and youngsters to have and to articulate these higher expectations.

Hilliard cited examples of educational projects in which at-risk students, including illiterate adults, had achieved "dramatic academic change . . . quickly." In one case, he said, a teacher in a Bedford-Stuyvesant school "taught fifth-grade students enough in one year to pass the ninth-grade Regents exam in math." Another teacher, he reported, "designed a system of teaching reading . . . [which resulted in] students reading simple sentences in the first twenty minutes of instruction . . . regardless of I.Q."

Levin suggested that educators "build on the strengths" of at-risk children and their families. Instead of viewing a nonreading child as "hopeless," for example, educators can use a child's enthusiasm for storytelling as a bridge to teaching writing and reading.

Fine suggested that students considering dropping out should have the right to "informed consent" about their options. They should be told, for example, how many students who drop out of school actually pass the GED test or succeed in a career as a result of training in a proprietary school.

Bilingual Education

LaFontaine said that schools should commit themselves to offering bilingual education "as a total educational program, not as a narrow pedagogical technique." Calling it "not merely a matter of a remedial program or compensatory education," LaFontaine said bilingual education "is a sound educational practice in and of itself" because it assists the individual to function in two language environments, stimulates communication in the educational process, and helps an individual become more self-confident.

While the exact content of programs may differ according to the students' needs, he said, several components should be included in any program for students with limited English proficiency: clearly articulated goals, identification and assessment of students, appropriately designed programs, qualified and well-trained staff, availability of appropriate instructional materials, a strong evaluation and research component, and parental and community involvement.

Teacher Education

The presenters also called for a reexamination of both the content and methods of teacher education and staff development. Comer stressed that the importance of injecting study of child development into the training of educators is critical. He said that failure to understand the importance of the "bonding" that occurs between parent and child and between teacher and child results in insensitive and ineffective teaching and school policies.

He described a child who, because of a trauma experienced at home, did not smile for four months. When the child finally smiled, the teacher became upset at the prospect that he would have to move on to another classroom soon. Normally, the move would have occurred. But in this case school officials understood the value of continuity of the child's relationship with the teacher and devised a way that he could stay with the teacher. The result was, Comer said, "more academic growth for the child."

Teacher training must be revised to provide teachers with meaningful exposure to successful teaching strategies, according to Hilliard. He urged school officials to identify classrooms and schools where these strategies are working and to provide both future and current teachers with an opportunity to observe them—ideally in person, but if not, on videotape.

"Many of the most profound findings of research are not known to educators," he said, suggesting that schools and university departments of education are "rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic*," rather than concentrating their efforts on transmitting knowledge about successful models. Creating videotapes of successful classroom practices and making them widely available would help educators to build on and replicate successful programs, Hilliard suggested.

Graham noted that "people use research when they think it will benefit them," and said there is a need to determine "how education researchers can produce research that will truly be sought after by the practitioners."

WHAT THE CHIEFS CAN DO

"I hope the chiefs will be in the locomotive car, rather than in the caboose."
MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

The strategies discussed in the last section constitute a substantive agenda from which individual chiefs as well as other educational and community leaders can select to address the problems of children at risk in the educational system.

In addition, many presenters urged chief state school officers to use their unique position of leadership to create public awareness of the needs of children at risk and to stimulate the will and commitment to respond to them. "If you can develop among the chiefs a sense of shared focus . . . the only thing that stands between us and success is the will to solve the problem," Hilliard told the group. "Keep public attention on the at-risk children," urged Graham.

Pointing to the need for public acceptance of an agenda for children at risk, Levin said he believes that "there's a potential political coalition available in most states to provide the support you need."

"I hope chiefs will be in the locomotive car [in addressing the needs of children at risk], rather than in the caboose," commented Edelman. Referring to an agenda for at-risk youngsters and particularly for teenage mothers and their children, she continued, "We don't think you can do it all, but you certainly have to hold up your piece of it . . ."

The speakers articulated a range of specific opportunities and needs for collaboration with others in the community. Spring said he believed that "the key difference in Boston was a few business leaders" who worked through a difficult process with educators to devise a collaborative strategy which both groups could support and implement.

Orfield called for leadership in developing desegregation plans, and in devising educational strategies that take into account the resources and problems of particular children and schools, rather than simply applying the same strategies to all children and areas of the state. This recommendation was echoed by other speakers, who suggested the need to reexamine which responsibilities and procedures should be the state's role and which might be devolved to local districts or schools.

Calling for "greater diversity and autonomy of response within a framework of state priorities," Walberg suggested that chiefs consider strategies including grants to school districts that want to improve their service to at-risk children by undertaking activities such as needs assessment, evaluation, or program planning.

Graham called for a more active role on the part of state education departments "in encouraging colleges and universities to establish more innovative, less hidebound programs to prepare teachers." Others called on the chiefs to develop closer relationships with other state officials and agencies, including those that operate job-training and day-care programs. Graham and others called for flexibility "among different schools to develop means to educate their clientele," saying that in the past, state regulations have sometimes limited the options available to school personnel.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

> *"We know what works. What's needed to educate at-risk children is not a mystery. What's needed is to . . . make it happen."*
>
> DAVID W. HORNBECK

In any meeting or conference where papers are presented, the discussion does not necessarily constitute a mirror image of the presentations. For many reasons, a selection process occurs and certain threads of thought are picked up, while others remain untouched.

The volume and complexity of the material presented at the Summer Institute was almost staggering. Although five days were devoted to presentations and discussions, the richness of perspectives and information brought to the group could simply not be fully discussed in that time.

Secondly, it was inevitable that some of the material presented would be viewed as already familiar or accepted knowledge, while other ideas would be seen as more provocative or requiring explanation and elaboration. Third, some chiefs may have seen discussion of certain issues or recommendations as being of more practical value to them in their process of moving toward both individual and collective agendas on education of at-risk children.

The following summary identifies some of the issues that stimulated the most active and continuing discussion throughout the Institute. The summary is not intended to reflect either a consensus or an official position on the part of the organizations or individuals who took part.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS AND ISOLATION

How the educational system should respond to children who live in inner-city ghettos and to inequality of resources and services available to different children in the same state prompted considerable discussion.

Speaking from his experience in a state that has very high per capita wealth and several very poor, racially segregated cities, one chief described the situation as "very separate and very unequal." His state's response, he said, is a policy that "we drive our entire program with a concept of equity . . . in order to be equal you have to provide unequal resources." He described a series of measures that the state has taken to redress the imbalance in resources. These include providing a total of $3 million to school districts throughout the state to develop a plan for addressing the special needs of children at risk that are not met by the conventional curriculum; and provision of more and better teachers to those types of districts. The latter has been done, he said, by raising salaries and thus enabling the state to compete for better teachers; and by appropriating special funds to hire more teachers to improve the pupil-teacher ratio in schools where many youngsters are at risk.

The question of which children and families remain in the ghetto and which are helped to leave—whether for education or jobs—sparked controversy. Some asked whether the development of entry-level jobs in the suburbs, out of reach of inner-city residents, suggests that transportation should be provided to the job seekers. Wilson replied that poor inner-city residents often could not afford cars or car insurance, and that development of public transportation has often been inhibited by both racism and concern that inner-city crime would be extended to suburban areas.

One chief suggested that the appointment of a full-time staff person as a liaison with black churches could be a positive way to work on behalf of at-risk youngsters in some communities. Working with the churches, the liaison appointed by this chief has facilitated distribution of a booklet for parents on how they can begin to work with their youngsters at age two or three to develop school readiness.

DIPLOMAS

Spring described a meeting in which a Boston educator told a local businessman, "You send buses out to suburban schools to hire white graduates when you won't hire our students because they are black." The businessman's reply was, "You know that we can't hire your students. Too many of them can't read." The businessman and educator in this story now work together as part of the Boston Compact's dual drive to keep youngsters in school until they have mastered the necessary skills and to ensure that they receive a job or are admitted to further education when they actually graduate. But the anecdote reflects the volatility of the complicated issues associated with the decision to award or not award a diploma to a student. Who should receive a diploma, under what conditions, and what it means were all debated.

The crux of the diploma debate is the inequality in school services and educational opportunity. Chiefs and presenters grappled with the problem of how to enforce reasonable educational standards for youngsters who "follow the rules," are promoted each year, and graduate from a school that lacks facilities and offers a "watered-down curriculum." Despite the diploma, such students may—as suggested by Spring's anecdote—actually lack the skills to perform on a job or in higher education.

In answer to a question about whether he thought inner-city children should be bused to suburban schools for the purpose of being provided with role models, Wilson responded that it was more important to encourage the maintenance and rebuilding of community institutions that would hold black middle- and working-class families in the city even when their education and income made it possible to leave.

Some members of the audience pressed Orfield about how he would resolve the disparity of educational services and access between children in ghetto schools and suburban schools, which he outlined in his presentation. Orfield's suggestion—that the best immediate hope is to "get some of the most-talented students out" of ghetto schools—provoked a spirited response from several members of the audience, who argued that this strategy would "create a two-tier system" and undermine the principles that "every child can learn" and that the public system has an equal obligation to serve all children.

Several chiefs raised questions about the application of the speakers' analyses to rural areas and small school districts which are common to their states. Presenters generally said that the problem of a decline in community institutions and in shared responsibility for nurturing children is occurring in rural areas and small towns as well as in metropolitan areas.

"The rural poor often live in depressed areas [and] they have the same problems of welfare dependency as inner-city residents," Wilson said. Like minority residents of big cities, he continued, "the whites of Appalachia, the blacks of the Deep South, and Indians on reservations form a sort of underclass."

Graham pointed out that in a small school district, it may be particularly hard to attract the teachers of "passion and compassion" who are needed to work with at-risk children.

The dilemma is compounded, suggested Spring from his experience, by the fact that employers are not always clear about what they expect of high-school graduates. They are "very evasive about reading level and math level. What they are really interested in is attendance, which they argue represents staying power," he said.

Fine pointed out that in addition to providing at-risk students with "access to jobs they would not have access to otherwise," a diploma also offers an important psychological boost. "There's an incredible sense of confidence [for those students who get it], and if you don't have it, an incredible sense of psychological loss," she said. "But," declared one chief, "to promote without competence is the ultimate cop-out."

What can be done to make sure that a diploma does represent learning and skills? Simply requiring competency tests is not the answer, many agreed, because many at-risk students will continue to fail, unless additional resources are provided to them and their schools. Retaining at-risk students in grade year after year, commented several participants, is not the solution. "Cumulative failure beats down a lot of kids," observed Fine. When students are retained in grade, she explained, "they end up in a class where they're too old or too tall, or in the same class with their younger brother," all of which can undermine their achievement.

Basing graduation decisions on exit tests is not the answer, it was suggested, because at-risk children who lack access to the quality of education necessary to succeed will increasingly face an atmosphere of failure and hopelessness on the part of the individual, the family, and the school.

In one state, a chief recounted, a committee which included representatives of the business and higher-education communities was set up to define a "core curriculum" of skills and knowledge to be mastered before high-school graduation. Rather than using an exit test as the measure of success, this chief explained, they are working toward what some have called an "exhibition of skills" by students through methods that include interviews and on-site observations to determine whether youngsters should receive a diploma.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND JOBS

The twin themes of the substantive value of a diploma and the relationship of educational proficiency to jobs surfaced again and again in the discussion. One chief expressed concern that youngsters in his state are dropping out of school to accept construction jobs or fast-food-service jobs, which he described as "terminal kinds of positions which lead nowhere." Others emphasized that although euphemisms such as "business services" are being used to describe the jobs becoming available in our shifting economy, many of these slots—such as janitor, nurse's aide, or watchman—"require very little skill and do not provide any mobility" to other jobs.

This phenomenon suggests both short- and long-range concerns and responses. In the short range, educators must face the question of how to convince students to stay in school long enough to accomplish the learning necessary to secure jobs with upward mobility, and how to counter the allure of a job that will only offer young people immediate access to the consumer society.

In the long range, commented one chief, "the demographics are going to drive the schools." He was referring to the fact that the birthrate—and with it the number of children who will become the labor force of the 1990s and the years after 2000—is declining. "We are in a condition of remarkable opportunity . . . with the smallest generation, they are going to be in demand." Because of the smaller number of youngsters in this cohort, "there's possibly an upward trajectory," which will cause an automatic improvement in the opportunities for children at risk, Wilson suggested. A chief countered, however, that because children at risk will be a larger percentage of the population than in the past, "the kids won't be in a position to seize the day unless we improve what we do."

Many of the strategies discussed in earlier sections are examples of what could be done. In some cases, it was suggested, youngsters see GED or proprietary-school programs as their route to future job success. Fine said, however, that dropout rates for these programs sometimes are very high, and that school systems should provide the facts about them to students before they drop out of public education. In addition to these recommendations, others suggested the creation of programs in which youngsters continue their education while working in part-time jobs, and more collaboration between educators and employers about how to address these issues together.

THE TIME SPENT IN SCHOOL

Do American children spend enough time in school? How much is enough? References to the fact that Asian children spend more time studying, both in school and after hours, and that some studies suggest that American youngsters who do so would perform better academically, led discussants to raise questions about the optimum length of the school day and year and the amount of homework to be assigned.

It was suggested that the Japanese model—in which children spend more hours with tutors in school and working with their parents at home—has its limitations, particularly because of the stress, reflected in youth suicide levels in that country. Walberg replied that although the issue is still of concern in Japan, the rate of youth suicide there has actually declined in recent years at the same time that academic standards have been made more rigorous.

Hilliard reported that "in Atlanta, Japanese kids go to school on Saturday," and that Chinese and Jewish youngsters also do so. "There are very few groups which are really successful as groups [when they] rely only on the [public] school day," he said.

Educators as well as students need more time for school, said several speakers. "Simply increasing the time [children spend in school] without changing the substance isn't enough," argued Levin.

"You need to provide time for teachers," one chief agreed. He explained that he was able to increase the days for professional development in some districts through contract negotiations with teachers' unions. The effort was encouraged by the fact that the state requires every teacher to participate in ninety days of staff development every five years as a prerequisite to continued certification. "Many districts, many unions, teachers' associations, saw the handwriting on the wall. They really wanted money." In some cases, this chief reported, the agreement to add days to the work year was accepted as a trade-off for salary increases, and in others an arbitrator facilitated the decision.

In another state, the chief reported, all teachers are hired for ten months rather than nine, and some of the extra time is used for staff development. Many chiefs endorsed Hilliard's suggestion that exemplary programs and teachers be videotaped for distribution to other schools and systems.

STATE EDUCATIONAL REFORM: BOON OR BUST?

"Reform is working," declared one chief in the final discussion session.

While the Institute by definition focused on problems and gaps in meeting the needs of children at risk, in the concluding discussion many chiefs cited educational reforms made in recent years that they believe have already had an impact on improving educational opportunities for these youngsters. In addition to those already discussed, the chiefs listed the following reforms:

- compiling and publishing data on achievement of children by district and school so that communities and policymakers can pinpoint problem areas and focus on them;
- citing as "academically bankrupt" those school districts whose students do not meet academic criteria, and changing leadership and/or resources provided to those districts;
- increasing early childhood education programs; and
- focusing additional resources on districts that have the most poor children.

These examples of positive actions were stressed in response to previous suggestions that educational reform has bypassed or even harmed many at-risk students. Orfield had suggested that one important weakness in reform efforts was that new standards were often not supported with the necessary funding to allow schools in poor neighborhoods to meet them. He and others argued that holding the children in these schools responsible for meeting the higher standards was an unfair guarantee of failure.

Spring had argued that deciding whether to award a diploma based on an exit test—as has become more common since the recent reforms—presents "a serious moral problem . . . to participate in a process which makes it more difficult to get a degree when you know that for low-income kids it's virtually impossible without the resources and remediation." He urged the chiefs "to take great pains to see that those schools have remediation programs . . . preferably for children identified before the ninth grade . . . not to tell them at seventeen or eighteen that they can't make it."

MAKING CHANGES

When the will exists, how can chiefs make the changes necessary to better serve children at risk? The question of state versus local responsibility for education of these children was a leitmotif throughout the Institute and surfaced more explicitly in the last day's discussions, during which participants focused on implementation strategies.

"In talking to local school-board members across the country," declared one chief, "you find that the biggest concern these days is 'top down.' " The issue becomes how far a state can go in implementing reforms if local school districts are recalcitrant.

One chief emphasized that the state and local prerogatives vary from state to state and urged his colleagues not to forget "the noneducator or part-time participant who makes most of the decisions"—including school-board members, legislators, and members of state boards of education. "We've been addressing this issue as though the noneducator decision makers are not a part of what we are about . .. at least they have to be brought into the picture if we're going to deal with it realistically.

"Historically," he continued, "we've left the equality of education to the local school district." But now in his state, he said, a district can be cited for having too many dropouts, for example, and be required by the state to take action—including meeting with the children and their parents—to reduce the incidence of dropping out.

"I'm a supporter of local control and do believe in grass-roots support," commented one chief. "The dilemma I have," he continued, "is, How long do we wait for the grass to grow?"

Another chief said that in his state "educational reform came because people gave up on anything happening at the local level . . . [where school districts had] freedom to *not* provide the education kids should get." His state responded, he explained, by pressuring districts from the "top down," by adopting minimum-competency standards, creating new programs for children at risk, and moving toward a funding formula that would provide more educational resources to districts with poor children.

He acknowledged that policies and programs for at-risk youngsters should "happen at the local level." Thus, as local districts prove their willingness to accept the responsibility of educating at-risk children, he said, the state will grant them more flexibility. In some states, funding mechanisms are seen as a stumbling block in addressing the needs of children at risk. "My state has virtually a flat formula . . . so the wealthiest kids in our state get the very same amount of money spent on them as our poorer kids." The only way to resolve this may be through legal action, he said.

Corruption among local officials—for example, in awarding and administering school construction contracts—is another problem that inhibits the state's ability to improve education, another chief said. This sentiment was echoed by yet another chief, who suggested that "there are districts where schools exist in order to exploit kids . . . money is passed around"—for example, to help members of the community secure jobs in the cafeteria or other parts of the school system.

In some states, an important component of educational reform has been the establishment of mechanisms to judge performance at the levels of district, school, and even classroom. In a few states, officials of districts whose youngsters lag behind are subject to removal. In some cases, such a ranking triggers the input of additional resources. Some chiefs said it is helpful to "disaggregate" data about academic performance so that the public can clearly see the differences among white and minority youngsters and poorer and richer districts.

Suggesting that he prefers offering "carrots" rather than "sticks" to school districts that are not performing well, one chief described a program known as "priority district grants." These may be used by districts with high numbers of at-risk youngsters to do their own needs assessments and provide the programs they think would be effective.

PRESIDENT'S SUMMARY

In a concluding session, CCSSO President David W. Hornbeck said that he was encouraged to hear from the presenters that "we do know what works." "What's needed to educate at-risk children is not a mystery," he said. He summed up what he felt were the most important messages from the Institute:

1. The impact of poverty on the nation's children runs very deep and the consequences are multiple, complex, and profound;
2. Schools have persistently failed to serve the children of poverty adequately;
3. All children can learn, including those who have been the focus of our effort during the 1987 CCSSO Summer Institute;
4. The curriculum does not need to be altered. The content and outcomes ought to be, in effect, the same for everybody, but there are multiple ways to achieve that goal;
5. We don't need more research to be successful; what's needed is more knowledge and understanding, and dissemination of what is already known about education of children at risk; and
6. "Kids need hope."

Hornbeck also identified some cross-cutting themes. The first, which he attributed to Spring, is that "we have to figure out ways so that society doesn't continue to trick kids" into thinking that they have a hopeful future when in fact they are receiving an inferior education.

Second, Hornbeck pointed to the theme of empowerment—"to allow the maximum meaningful decision-making at a point closest to the classroom." Finally, he stressed that the teacher remains the key actor in the educational process. "The subject matter is important," he observed, "but commitment [on the part of educators] is at least as important."

Summing up the week's discussion, Hornbeck said: "The issue is how we make that information create the context . . . on the one hand, permit it to happen; on the other hand, make it happen. Walking that thin line between those two is our challenge." President Hornbeck called on his colleagues to use the information both to devise strategies for their own states (as individual chiefs) and to develop and implement an agenda for the Council.

Part 2 CCSSO ANALYSIS

Recommendations for Action

ASSURING SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS AT RISK

A Council Policy Statement
Adopted November 1987

Council of Chief State School Officers

INTRODUCTION

An imperative for America's twenty-first century is high-school graduation for virtually all students.

During the past several years, the states have undertaken strong initiatives to increase expectations and standards for students and to enhance state support for the schools. The states must now take the necessary steps to ensure that these new expectations are met by *all* students.

From the beginning, this nation has been committed to education as fundamental to the success of a free democratic republic. Over two centuries we have made profound advances in expanding educational opportunity to ensure our form of government and our quality of life. Increasingly, we have realized that our entire population must be literate and well-educated for our social, economic, and political effectiveness. We have moved toward the objective of a *fully* literate and educated population. But we have not attained it.

Our nation is at risk of starting the twenty-first century with one in every four youngsters failing to complete the essentials of learning. There was a time in this nation when school failure and little education did not foreclose a person's options for a self-sufficient and fulfilling life *nor* impede the nation's capacity in trade, defense, environmental condition, or quality of life. That time is gone. Technological advances, demographic changes, international competition, and the intense pressures of providing a better life for greater numbers of people on a seemingly shrinking planet today require a citizenry educated at least through high-school graduation. This is imperative for our nation.

We are not meeting that imperative. One out of four youths does not graduate. The greatest proportions of those who are at risk of not graduating are poor, minority, and of limited English proficiency. We must serve them by taking several actions *now.* The high-school class of 2000 entered kindergarten this year. Children of the classes of 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 are already born—one-quarter of them living in poverty. Our society must commit more resources for quality education. We must strengthen the practice of teaching. We must provide help and incentives for schools to change their programs to succeed with children at risk.

Above all we must make a commitment of *will* to a nationwide goal of high-school graduation for virtually all students. This commitment of will must be manifest in our states' assurances of educational quality for all and our states' guarantees of the affirmative practices which are necessary to ensure that children at risk graduate.

PRINCIPLES

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) holds these principles:

- In each state there must be an equitable opportunity for each person to earn a high-school diploma at public expense.
- Each person, with the rare exceptions of some who have severe disabilities, has the capacity to meet the standards for a high-school diploma.
- Because different individuals learn in different ways, *how* students are successfully taught should vary; *what* each student learns, however, must include a challenging and common curriculum.
- As the nation's chief education officers, our obligation is to provide education programs and to assure other necessary related services so that this nation enters the twenty-first century with virtually all students graduating from high school.

REALITY—1987

The stark reality is that we have not yet found the way to succeed with the one-quarter of all students who do not complete high school. Students not graduating or not likely to graduate are *at risk* of lifelong dependence.

We have abundant analyses and evidence that students at risk are often poor, minority, or non-English-speaking. Students at risk frequently lack community and family support. Evidence shows clearly that the schools' failure to serve students at risk results from these factors: low expectations for student performance, inadequate resources, uneven quality of teaching staff, absence of close school/home connections, and the inadequacy of school programs.

We believe our students have the capacity to learn and our educational system has the capacity to teach so that the objective for the year 2000 for high-school graduation for virtually all students can be attained. To accomplish this objective will require substantial changes in education policy and in school practice now.

STATE ASSURANCES

In the United States, elementary and secondary education is fundamentally a state responsibility. The basic obligation to provide education is lodged at the state level where state law assigns authority to local and state jurisdictions.

Three levels of government—local, state and federal—share financial support for education. Nationwide and local objectives must be assisted by funding at the federal and local levels. This funding, together with support from the states, must increase to meet obligations to children at risk.

The states must lead the way to provide resources to enable *all* schools to offer a program of high quality, to strengthen the practice of teaching in *all* schools, to provide help and incentive for *all* schools to increase their effectiveness, and to assure *all* children the guarantee of genuine opportunity for high-school graduation, backed by affirmative practices for children at risk.

STATE GOVERNMENT ASSURANCE

The laws of each state should provide for an elementary- and a secondary-school education program of high quality for all students. State law should provide for the supporting health, social welfare, employment, housing, safety, transportation, and other human services that, together with the educational programs, are reasonably calculated to enable all persons to graduate from high school. These supporting services are essential for educational success. In recognition of their special needs, children and youth at risk of failure to graduate from high school should be guaranteed the following:

GUARANTEES

- An education program of the quality available to students who attend schools with high rates of secondary-school graduates. The program should be supplemented by educational services that are integrated with the regular program and that are necessary for the student to make progress toward high-school graduation and to graduate.
- Enrollment in a school that demonstrates substantial and sustained student progress that leads at least to graduation from high school.
- Enrollment in a school with an appropriately certified staff which has continuous professional development.
- Enrollment in a school with systematically designed and delivered instruction of demonstrable effectiveness, and with adequate and up-to-date learning technologies and materials of proven value.
- Enrollment in a school with safe and functional facilities.
- A parent- and early-childhood-development program beginning ideally for children by age three, but no later than age four.
- A written guide for teaching and learning for each student, prepared with and approved by the student and his or her parents, which maps the path to high-school graduation.
- A program for participation of families as partners in learning at home and at school as their children proceed toward high-school graduation.

- Effective supporting health and social services to overcome conditions that put the student at risk of failing to graduate from high school.
- Education information about students, schools, school districts, and the states to enable identification of students at risk and to report on school conditions and performance. The information must be sufficient to let one know whether the above guarantees are being met and to provide a basis for local and state policies to improve student and school performance.
- Procedures by which students and parents, or their representatives, can be assured that these guarantees are met.

IMPLEMENTATION

The assurances and guarantees in state education law will likely take different form in the several states. State laws vary in their format, definition, existent substantive provisions, assignment of authority to either state or local jurisdictions, funding provisions or obligations, and implementation dates. The Council advocates that the state government assurances and guarantees presented here be authorized by each state through specific statutory provisions appropriate to each state. To assist the states in legislative or regulatory action to implement these assurances and guarantees, the Council has prepared a model state statute. The state statute provides one means of implementation which a state could use. The precise form of statutory commitment must be in the hands of each state. The commitment to the principles and the implementation of the assurances and guarantees stated here is the common and essential part of this Council's position.

CONCLUSION

The imperative for beginning America's twenty-first century with high-school graduation for virtually all students demands unprecedented and bold actions by the states. The states together must express a *will to succeed.* The expression must become manifest in actions to authorize educational guarantees. Other actions must also be taken. A national survey report, "Children At Risk: The Work of the States," prepared by the Council, includes suggested actions which the Council recommends on the basis of promising practices in one or more of the states.

To meet the imperative, the states *and* local and federal governments must increase resources for education; the practice of teaching must be strengthened; schools must be helped to change their programs and improve their effectiveness; parents and communities must be engaged with schools in full partnerships. In addition to advances within the education system, there must be a new harmony between education and related support programs. Ill health, poor housing, inadequate nutrition, unsafe streets—these promote the conditions of risk. They are conditions to be changed while schools are improved. Evoking change is a multiagency responsibility. It requires reaching out from education to other systems, and actions by public authorities who are responsible for these combinations of service. A commitment to such outreach must be made.

The class of 2000 started kindergarten this fall. Think of the eager learning and vigorous play of those children. Who among them should drop out by 2000? None! But if conditions continue as today, one out of four will be lost. One by one, each of those children must be guided during the next thirteen years along the path to graduation. This is imperative for them and for our nation.

CHILDREN AT RISK

The Work of the States

Council of Chief State School Officers

The findings and recommendations of this report were approved unanimously by the members of the Council of Chief State School Officers at the annual meeting in November 1987 in Asheville, North Carolina. This report was prepared for the Council of Chief State School Officers' Study Commission by Richard J. Coley and Dr. Margaret E. Goertz of the Educational Testing Service. Coley and Goertz were consultants to the Study Commission and worked closely with its Executive Board and the CCSSO staff. They compiled state data, analyzed the responses from the state education agencies, and prepared the final report. CCSSO acknowledges and is grateful for their significant contribution and hard work in the preparation of this report on educational services for students at risk.

The Council would also like to thank Gloria Frazier, who worked as a consultant with the Study Commission Executive Board and designed the survey instrument that was distributed to the states. Special thanks go to Maryland Deputy State Superintendent of Schools Claud E. Kitchens and University of Maryland doctoral student Lawrence Leak, who oversaw the essential tasks of collecting and cataloging the survey returns.

PREFACE

The CCSSO Study Commission has devoted 1987 to the study of at-risk children and youth. The Study Commission is the body of deputy chief state school officers. In order to develop an information base for analysis and preparation of recommendations to the Chief State School Officers, the Study Commission developed two surveys to elicit information about how the needs of at-risk students are being defined and met through changes in legislation, regulations, or funding; how state departments of education and school districts are involved with other agencies, organizations, and businesses; what factors are seen as obstacles to serving at-risk students effectively; and how successful children-at-risk programs and practices are designed and operated. The first survey, the State Education Agency (SEA) Questionnaire, collected information from the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. The second survey, the At-Risk Student Program Description, was completed by the directors of sixty-nine programs identified by the states and territories as successful in serving the needs of at-risk youth.

This report presents the findings of these surveys. The Introduction describes the nature of the problem, obstacles to meeting the needs of at-risk students, and general strategies for effective programs. The second section presents a set of recommended goals and activities to be pursued by the Chief State School Officers. These recommendations emerged from the deliberations of the Study Commission at its annual meeting in September 1987. The third section summarizes current state activities on behalf of at-risk children and youth. The report concludes with examples of successful programs for at-risk children and youth.

INTRODUCTION

Changing demographics, new state education-reform policies, the concerns of business and industry, and increasing national attention on the problem of at-risk youth have sparked an interest at the state level in dealing with the needs of at-risk children and youth. As one survey respondent wrote:

> The problem demands immediate attention. These children are caught in systems that historically do not respond to their individual needs. . . . This population is growing as poor teenagers and minority groups continue to have the highest birth rates and are under the most stress in society.

The concerns of the state respondents are reflected in the writings of educational demographers and economists. The demographics of our educational system are driven by the changing demographics in the United States. Hodgkinson (1985) reports that nonwhites will be a third of the American population by the year 2000. Fifty-nine percent of the children who turn eighteen by that year will have lived in a single-parent household. Twenty-two percent of all children lived in poverty in 1983, up from 16 percent in 1979. A child under six is *six times* more likely to be poor than a person over sixty-five. Increasingly, children are giving birth to children—having babies who are more likely to be premature, underweight, and born with developmental problems.

These trends mean that more children are entering school from poverty households, from single-parent households (rural and urban), from minority backgrounds, and with learning disabilities. These are children with whom schools historically have often not succeeded. Levin (1985) estimates that at least 30 percent of today's schoolchildren are educationally disadvantaged. He argues that ignoring the educational needs of these students will lead to a deterioration in the quality of the nation's labor force, a loss of tax revenues from productive workers, rising costs for public assistance, and the specter of a dual society—one composed primarily of well-educated, prosperous nonminorities and one composed mainly of poorly educated, unemployed or underemployed, low-paid minorities.

The survey respondents wrote that meeting the needs of at-risk children is a formidable task. State and local school districts face a series of economic, structural, attitudinal, and other obstacles to effectively serving this population. The primary obstacle is fiscal. The decreasing federal role in education, the poor condition of many state and local economies, and a lack of state legislative commitment and leadership to find resources for children-at-risk programs make new funds for these programs difficult to obtain.

Even when federal and state aid is available, the categorical nature of many funding programs for at-risk students limits the flexibility of local school districts in providing a continuum of services to students. In the words of a survey respondent:

> Often the problem is more pervasive than dealing with the symptoms (low achievement, drug abuse), but the funding source limits the ability to address the underlying problem or to address similar problems.

Putting students in special classes (the "pullout" service model used in many categorical programs) may also be detrimental to the at-risk student. Unless well coordinated among teachers, pullout programs tend to fragment the basic instructional program for students participating in them.

The difficulty of developing alternative education programs and a lack of coordination and cooperation among service providers also serve as major structural barriers to meeting the needs of at-risk students. Some students have trouble adapting to the social structure and academic requirements of a traditional four-year comprehensive high school and lack personal identity and meaningful involvement in this setting. Yet, schools as organizations are not equipped to offer alternative programs or nontraditional services, such as child care and family counseling. State and local rules and procedures, community attitudes about the role of the school in providing nontraditional services, and a lack of interagency coordination and collaboration often militate against the development of relevant programs or options.

These problems are confounded by negative attitudes about at-risk students themselves, attitudes that include a "blaming-the-victim" mentality, the perception that not all children can learn, and the feeling that, for a substantial number of children, school is not the appropriate place. The unwillingness of local districts to take responsibility for this population and a lack of priority for at-risk learners, particularly at the federal level, are causes for concern as well.

Another obstacle to the development of programs for at-risk students is the need for better information on the characteristics of effective programs and on the demographic characteristics of the at-risk student population. States desire information on criteria for defining the at-risk population; ways to identify, disseminate, and fund effective programs; and ways of developing program collaboration and coordination. A majority of the states expressed a need for new or additional data on dropouts, special-program participants, student and family characteristics, and demographic trends. In addition, they would like better coordination of data collection among state agencies and more uniformity and consistency of definitions and data formats.

The states identified four general elements of effective strategies for meeting the needs of at-risk children and youth: (1) collaboration and coordination;

(2) staff and parental involvement in the planning and implementation of programs for at-risk students; (3) emphasis on prevention and early intervention; and (4) opportunities for nontraditional educational experiences. Any effective strategy will require a team effort that involves all relevant state agencies, business and industry, communities, schools, and parents. Programs that operate at the building level and involve all of the school's staff and parents in planning and implementation are considered the most likely to succeed. More program emphasis should be placed on prevention and early intervention, and these efforts should be generic rather than focused on a single risk such as substance abuse. Finally, nontraditional educational arrangements should be encouraged. School structures need to be changed to accommodate the growing diversity of student populations.

These strategies are reflected in a wide range of state and local activities in support of at-risk children and youth. Some of these activities are described in the preceding section and the last section of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

States recognize that the complexity of the at-risk student problem requires multifaceted solutions, not a "quick fix." States have taken steps to study the problem, to develop mechanisms for coordinated planning, to implement categorical programs, and to support local school-district initiatives. Policymakers face two major tasks, however, as they continue to address the needs of at-risk students: building a consensus among educators, legislators, and community and business leaders for mandating and funding state programs for at-risk youth; and overcoming resistance to change at the state and local levels. Meeting the needs of at-risk students will require time, commitment, and considerable resources from federal, state, and local governments.

The goal is clear. We believe that our students have the capacity to learn and that our educational system has the capacity to teach so that the objective for the year 2000 for high-school graduation for virtually all students can be attained. To accomplish this objective will require substantial changes in educational policy and in school practice now.

To this end, the CCSSO Study Commission recommends that the Chief State School Officers pursue the following goals:

- Leadership in the education of the public about the human loss and economic consequences of failing to meet the needs of at-risk children and youth.
- Pursuit of sufficient financial resources to meet the educational needs of at-risk children and youth.
- Elimination of constraints to the provision of appropriate and effective educational services for at-risk children and youth.

- Identification of the characteristics of effective educational programs and practices for at-risk students.
- Establishment of high-quality and developmentally appropriate early-childhood programs and curricula from preschool through second grade at a minimum.
- Entitlement of each at-risk student to access to a curriculum that is challenging and includes a common core of knowledge for all students.
- Provision of alternative educational programs for at-risk youth for whom traditional educational approaches have proven unsuccessful (e.g., smaller classes, extra vocational training, literacy training for youth offenders with rewards of reduced sentences for participation).
- Assurance that students have experiences that lead to employability skills.
- Assurance of an integrated, school-initiated community-home support system for at-risk students.
- Development of curricula and instructional techniques that enhance diverse cultural understanding.
- Promotion of the need for and the value of a staff that reflects the cultures of all students.
- Improvement of teacher pre-service and in-service training to prepare teachers to work with at-risk students.
- Initiation of data collection systems that enable school officials to identify appropriate program and individual needs.

These goals should be pursued by the Chief State School Officers through the following recommended activities:

1. Undertake a public-education campaign about the economic consequences of failure to address the educational challenges presented by at-risk students. Tailor arguments for political leaders.
2. Define at-risk students as those students who are not likely to complete high school successfully.
3. Target for services pregnant teenagers, teenage parents, and their children.
4. Work to get teachers to increase their expectations for at-risk students.
5. Avoid stigmatizing and labeling at-risk children and their families.
6. Provide for effective involvement and training for the parents of at-risk students.
7. Promote for each at-risk student the opportunity to attend a school in which adult advocates continuously oversee and direct these students' well-being and educational development/progress.

8. Establish early child development programs for three- and four-year-olds. Provide program options for younger children.

9. Provide support and programs for all students at transitional periods in their educational sequences (e.g., the transitions from elementary to junior high school and from junior high school to senior high school).

10. Provide supplementary instructional programs for at-risk students (e.g., summer school, extended school day).

11. Encourage school-based work programs for at-risk students. Relate jobs to students' academic program.

12. Insure adequate support for guidance services for at-risk students.

13. Use programs such as community education programs to play a key role in attracting dropouts back to school.

14. Support scholarship programs and other incentives to increase the pool of culturally diverse teachers.

15. Identify and remove barriers to effective education for at-risk students, created by federal and state programmatic and fiscal requirements.

16. Strengthen regular classroom services by altering or eliminating pullout programs (e.g., consider using categorical-program teachers in classrooms as resource coaches to assist regular teachers in working with at-risk students).

17. Provide necessary additional resources, particularly for new programs (e.g., early-childhood development), after first considering the most effective use of existing resources to meet the needs of at-risk students.

18. Fund research to identify effective educational programs for at-risk students, especially with regard to developing teacher-training techniques to meet the diversity of student learning styles.

19. Provide financial and technical assistance for demonstration projects on promising programs for at-risk students, based on research findings (e.g., instructional arrangements, age for school entrance, flexible scheduling, alternative schools or programs).

20. Adjust school finance formulas to provide *additional* funds for districts with high concentrations of at-risk students.

21. Encourage governors to establish cabinet-level cooperative agreements among agencies providing services to at-risk students and their families. Similar interagency cooperative agreements should be established at the local level and should include private, nonprofit service providers.

22. Establish school-based collaborative arrangements with neighborhood health- and social-service providers.

23. Establish partnerships with business and industry to provide effective school-to-work transitions for at-risk students.

24. Monitor programs for at-risk students regularly and provide full reports to the public, especially about unanticipated results (e.g., initial decline in achievement test scores because of increased retention of at-risk students).
25. Provide education information about students, schools, school districts, and states to enable identification of students at risk and to report on school conditions and performance. The information must be sufficient to let one know whether program goals are being met and to provide a basis for local and state policies to improve student and school performance.

STATE ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF AT-RISK CHILDREN AND YOUTH

States have already begun to take steps to identify and serve at-risk children and youth. This section provides an overview of (1) the range of definitions that states report using to identify at-risk students, (2) state legislation and programs that address both the total at-risk student population and subgroups of students considered to be at risk, (3) the extent and nature of cross-agency cooperation and collaboration, and (4) state funding of at-risk programs.

HOW STATES DEFINE THEIR AT-RISK TARGET POPULATIONS

Thirty-nine state education agencies (SEAs) reported the existence of a working definition of "at-risk student" in their states. The definitions used by the SEAs fall into one or more of the following four categories: students with low achievement levels; students with behavioral problems; students at risk of dropping out of school; and/or students exhibiting one or more at-risk indicators (e.g., low academic performance, poor attendance, behavioral problems, personal economic problems). In addition, definitions of at-risk students can vary within a state, either across state agencies and programs or across local school districts.

Three states use, or plan to use, academic progress as the primary criterion for defining at-risk students. Hawaii and Missouri define children or youth as being at risk if they consistently fail to make satisfactory progress in school. Proposed legislation in North Carolina uses more specific criteria: scoring below the 50th percentile on a standardized systemwide test, falling one or more years behind in grade-level achievement, or displaying evidence of behavior patterns that, if not corrected, are likely to result in academic achievement or psychological adaptation below a level that could reasonably be expected for the student.

Only one state, North Dakota, focuses specifically on students' behavioral problems. Its definition, which grew out of hearings by a governor's commission on at-risk children and adolescents, includes students who are abused and neglected, suicidal, emotionally and behaviorally disturbed, or chemically dependent and abusing, as well as delinquents and the dependents of alcoholics.

Eleven states define their target population as students who are at risk of dropping out of school prior to graduation—generally for reasons of low academic achievement, environmental factors (such as family poverty, limited proficiency in English, handicapping conditions), and other student behaviors or conditions (e.g., pregnancy, tardiness, substance abuse, and/or lack of involvement in school activities).

Another nine states reported a somewhat broader definition of at-risk students. These states do not restrict their identification of at-risk students to those who have the potential to drop out of school—their definitions also include most of the criteria discussed in the preceding paragraph. For example, Virginia's draft definition of children educationally at risk includes those "who may not succeed in school or may not successfully make the transition from school to productive lives." Conditions that place children at risk educationally include family conditions (poverty; cultural/linguistic differences; migrancy), academic failure, low self-esteem, negative student behaviors (truancy; disruptive, suicidal, runaway, or criminal behaviors; substance abuse), pregnancy, and dropping out of school. Ohio's definition adds inadequate readiness skills/developmental delay and inappropriate school placement, instruction, and/or school curriculum to the list of contributing factors; and includes individuals from birth through twenty-one years of age in its coverage. New Jersey uses the concept of a continuum to identify students who require differing kinds of school responses, levels of effort, and intensities of intervention. The continuum encompasses student needs ranging from "those all students experience as they strive to meet personal, family, and community standards to the profound needs which, if unmet, lead to dropping out."

Thirteen states reported that the definition of at-risk students varies by units and/or program category within the state. In Utah, for example, students are defined as being "consistent with agency or department responsibilities." Vermont noted that the definition of "at risk" is made in the context of the program and service needed. Mississippi indicated that the definition differs across programs, since the ability to serve most special populations rests on federal funding.

In two states, Colorado and Maine, definitions of at-risk students are developed at the local level. In Colorado, local districts have developed definitions that look at variables such as academic performance, attendance, parent education level, and grade retention. Maine requires school districts to identify and address the needs of at-risk students in their school-improvement plans. Checklists that may be used include factors such as low self-esteem, truancy, poor academic performance, disciplinary actions, and personal problems.

STATE EDUCATION LEGISLATION AND PROGRAMS FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

Thirty states reported having legislation or programs that are designed to meet the needs of at least some subgroup of the at-risk student population. Five states described legislation that addresses more than one section of the at-risk student population. For example, California's SB 65 provides for the establishment of publicly or privately operated nonsectarian educational clinics to provide educational and employment-related services to high-school dropouts. It also creates school-based, coordinated pupil-motivation and maintenance programs to keep pupils in school. Schools that participate in this program are given greater flexibility in the use of categorical aid for such programs as school improvement programs, compensatory education programs, bilingual education/ESL programs, and programs for gifted and talented students. By waiving regulations for the use of these funds, the state hopes to encourage districts to develop comprehensive long-range plans to meet the needs of all at-risk students.

Colorado, Georgia, and Illinois addressed the at-risk issue in education-reform legislation that focuses on such issues as prekindergarten, full-day kindergarten, truant and dropout prevention, alternative education programs, support and dissemination of promising pilot programs, and early childhood screening. For example, Illinois provides grants to local education agencies (LEAs) to conduct screening programs to identify children aged three to five who are at risk of academic failure and to provide appropriate educational programs for those children to increase the likelihood of school success. The Georgia State Board of Education designates LEAs as demonstration school systems to improve educational programs. Several of these sites provide models of programs to serve at-risk students.

Rhode Island's Literacy and Dropout Prevention Act of 1987 includes early screening, remediation for kindergarten through grade twelve, and dropout prevention. Local school districts will be required to focus kindergarten-through-grade three instruction on literacy for all students and to provide supplementary literacy instruction at four levels of intervention: intensive development in kindergarten through grade three; early intervention in grades four through six; remediation in grades seven and eight; and intensive remediation in grades nine through twelve.

Twenty-two states and territories described specific legislation or programs designed to meet the needs of at least one group of at-risk students. Connecticut, Kentucky, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania provide grants to LEAs to develop and implement dropout-prevention programs. In Massachusetts the local school districts must form local dropout-prevention advisory councils to assist in program development and implementation. Florida's dropout-prevention program includes retrieval activities that identify and motivate dropouts to reenter school and earn a diploma; education alternatives for students who are unsuccessful or disinterested; substance-abuse programs; and community-based programs provided by nonprofit agencies to supplement LEA dropout-prevention programs.

New York's program of Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Aid focuses on LEAs where attendance falls below a certain standard. Districts must submit to the SEA corrective plans that include methods of identifying at-risk students in the eighth grade and specific actions to increase attendance and retention rates. In Texas, HB 1010, Dropout Prevention Program, requires the central education agency to develop a program that includes standardized statewide record-keeping, documentation of school transfers by students, and follow-up procedures for dropouts. The goal is to reduce the statewide longitudinal dropout rate to not more than 5 percent of the total school population.

A number of the states reported the existence of programs designed to meet the needs of other at-risk subpopulations. Basic skills, remediation, and reading programs were cited in Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Washington. Prekindergarten and/or early-childhood education programs were reported in New York, Oklahoma, and Washington. Programs for students with limited English proficiency were cited in Hawaii. Pregnancy, parenting, and/or day-care initiatives were reported in Delaware, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, and Washington. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington cited substance-abuse programs; suicide-prevention programs were reported in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Three states have developed strategies that require local school districts to address the at-risk students in kindergarten through grade twelve as part of their school-improvement plans. Wisconsin adopted a similar requirement in 1985. North Carolina's draft legislation would require districts to develop and implement individualized plans for providing services to students identified as being at risk. Local plans would include provisions related to prevention and early intervention, curriculum modification, counseling and other support services, attendance improvement, parental involvement, and the establishment of a Local Council for Students at Risk.

STATE CATEGORICAL PROGRAMS

Long before the term "at-risk" came into use, special populations of students were the focus of specific state education initiatives. About three-quarters of the states and territories reported the existence of categorical programs designed to meet the needs of at-risk subpopulations (see Table). Aside from early-childhood programs and programs for incarcerated youth, only half or fewer of the states responding report the existence of legislation in these areas.

The questionnaire did not collect information on the nature of these laws, regulations, and policies or on the level and source of funding. Therefore, we do not know the extent of the operation of the programs within a state or whether state laws mandate the provision of these services to eligible students or merely permit districts to operate programs at their discretion.

CROSS-AGENCY COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

Cross-agency cooperation and collaboration is of great concern at the state level, and states are taking action to increase coordination across state agencies and to require coordination and/or collaboration at the local school-district level.

Four states provided details on formalized cross-agency planning activities at the state level. The North Dakota legislature recently established a children's

TABLE

	Legislation	*Regulations*	*Programs*
Compensatory Education	24	27	37
Bilingual/ESL Education	20	27	39
Early-Childhood Education	30	28	40
Preschool Education	27	27	38
Education and Support Services for Pregnant Teenagers	14	19	40
Education for Incarcerated Youth	28	32	43
Education for Dropouts	19	21	38
Dropout Prevention	18	19	37
Substance Abuse	25	23	43

services coordinating committee to develop a plan for a coordinated delivery of services to children and adolescents. Its major responsibility is the development of a plan that will include definitions and criteria for identification of at-risk children, a description of governmental services authorized for children and adolescents, and recommendations for new mechanisms to improve coordination of public and private services for this group. In 1986 the Maryland legislature required that the Maryland State Departments of Education, Human Resources, and Health and Mental Hygiene collaboratively report on the unmet special needs of children and plan for services to meet these needs. The resulting "Interagency Plan for Children with Special Needs" sets priorities for developing or expanding services needed by special-needs children and their families; increases interagency coordination in planning, financing, case management, and administration of services; and establishes an agenda for action.

Arkansas is currently developing an "Arkansas Youth-At-Risk State Plan" that will incorporate Project SPARK (Services Provided for At-Risk Kids), a project that included the creation of a Governor's Task Force on Youth At Risk and the development of cooperative efforts to boost business and community involvement in structuring programs for at-risk youth. Ohio's "Formula for Education Success" promotes SEA interdivisional coordination in developing materials and facilitating conferences and in providing of technical assistance to local school districts as they develop their own plans for at-risk students.

Several states reported having requirements for coordination or collaboration at the local school district level. Legislation relating to community-based dropout-prevention programs in Florida, for example, requires coordination between LEAs and community agencies. Similarly, Wisconsin's at-risk legislation requires LEAs and communities to work collaboratively, and a number of new state school-district standards require cooperative agreements to meet pupil needs. Both Georgia and Massachusetts require the documentation of community involvement as a condition for receiving certain program grant funds. In

Massachusetts, local advisory councils, composed of representatives of various community organizations, participate in proposal and program development and in implementation activities.

School and business partnerships have also contributed to successful at-risk programs. Business generally sponsors a particular activity such as basic skills training, career or job training, attendance incentive contributions, or job provision. The Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) was also cited as an example of a partnership for at-risk students. In the state of Washington, seventy LEAs, working with their private-industry councils (PICs), have joint training programs that focus on keeping students in school. Similarly, in West Virginia, the SEA has worked with the state PICs to use JTPA funds in working with potential dropouts.

STATE FUNDING OF AT-RISK PROGRAMS

Twenty-four states and territories reported new funding programs in support of at-risk students. By and large, new funding programs are small, are categorical in nature, and provide financial support for the types of initiatives described in the section on at-risk legislation and programs, particularly dropout-prevention and early-childhood-education programs.

Most of the new funding programs discussed by the states draw on state funds. A few states reported using federal funds (Drug-Free Schools, JTPA, vocational education set-asides, compensatory education) to address the needs of at-risk students, while others noted that state health and community affairs departments provide funds for at-risk youth.

The states also use different methods of allocating new funds for at-risk students to local school districts. Some states provide funds to a limited number of districts, using competitive grants. In other states, all districts are eligible to receive funds, but they must be in the form of grants. Florida's Dropout Prevention Program's funds are distributed to districts through a pupil weighting of 1.67 in the general operating aid formula. Indiana, Illinois, and New York are examples of states that take student, school, and/or district characteristics into account when allocating funds for some of their at-risk student programs. New York targets its Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Aid on districts with low attendance rates. New legislation in Indiana will disburse aid to districts on the basis of the percentage of families in poverty, single-parent households, and households headed by non-high-school graduates. Thirty percent of the funds for Illinois' Reading Improvement Program are distributed on the basis of the number of disadvantaged pupils in each school district.

Fourteen states changed funding approaches or were considering new strategies for acquiring and distributing funds for at-risk students. One reported change is the search for alternative or nontraditional funding sources to address the problems of at-risk students, along with more collaboration and pooling of resources. A significant change noted in one state was the cooperative venture of four state agencies' pooling federal funds to deal with chemical abuse through a mini-grant program to schools. Another SEA is exploring federal and private sources of additional funding for at-risk students and is preparing a proposal for funding from the National Centers for Disease Control for AIDS prevention.

Several SEAs are examining or implementing changes in their state aid formulas to recognize the needs of at-risk students. Such changes include revising the way that pupils are counted for state aid purposes; assigning at-risk students weightings within the school aid formula that reflect actual program costs; equalizing optional local funding so that poorer LEAs can raise additional dollars; modifying existing formula adjustments, such as a poverty factor; distributing a portion of state aid on the basis of the number or percentage of dropouts; and increasing funding for school counselors and other school-level support services to work with at-risk students.

States are concerned, however, that the level of priority given to at-risk students and issues is insufficient to generate significant resources, particularly in state legislatures. This low level of priority is driven by a number of factors: a lack of knowledge about the critical importance of the mission of the school in reducing the number of at-risk students; the attitude, among some, that new money is not necessary; the question of why general school aid is not sufficient; the question of the fairness of new dollars being targeted for cities and communities with large concentrations of at-risk students; and the question of whether the outcomes of new programs will justify expenditures. At-risk students must also compete with better-entrenched interests for services, such as the "general" school population; recent education-reform activity, including statewide assessment programs; career-ladder programs for teachers; and teacher testing. Items such as remediation programs, in-school suspension programs, and special instructional programs are often phased in as funds become available.

SUMMARY

The survey produced evidence that the states are becoming increasingly active in identifying and serving at-risk students. While there is much diversity in how states choose to define at-risk students, most of the states have developed working definitions to guide them in developing legislation and programs. State legislative and program approaches include those targeted at the total at-risk population, those focused on the needs of specific subgroups of this population, those delegating program responsibilities to LEAs, and those requiring some form of cross-agency collaboration or coordination at the state level. In addition, states have supported categorical programs to meet the needs of special students. Many of the SEAs report new funding programs for at-risk students. By and large, these new programs are small, categorical in nature, and focus on dropout prevention and early-childhood education.

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS

As part of the CCSSO Study Commission's survey, each state was asked to identify three successful programs that have been serving the needs of at-risk students for at least two years. Completed questionnaires were received from sixty-nine programs. Thirty programs focused on dropouts or potential dropouts at the high-school level; nineteen focused on dropout prevention at the pre-high-school level; fourteen were geared for children at the preschool and elementary level; ten focused on pregnancy, drug abuse, or "wellness"; and three were federal or state categorical programs. (Since some programs served more than one group, some programs are counted more than once.) Within each type of program, a variety of approaches was reported. The programs described below are illustrative of the approaches found in each category.

PROGRAMS FOR HIGH-SCHOOL DROPOUTS OR POTENTIAL DROPOUTS

Designed to serve high-school dropouts or potential dropouts were alternative high schools, programs involving the business community, extended-day programs, mainstream high-school programs, and statewide programs.

The District of Columbia's Spingarn STAY High School is an alternative school that is mandated by the board of education and serves students who enroll voluntarily or who are referred to it by the schools or the courts. D.C.'s Washington-Dix Street Academy has three fourteen-week sessions. A full-time student who enters with ninth-grade credits can earn a diploma in two and a half years.

Examples of programs that involve the business community were reported by California and South Dakota. California's Partnership Academies (nine LEAs) are designed to provide potential dropouts with motivation for success by using a school-within-a-school structure to provide a home base of support and a school/business partnership to provide technical training. Students enter the program in the tenth grade and take academic classes plus technical lab classes. The program also provides a company mentor, part-time work, and summer employment. Students are identified by counselors and teachers during the ninth grade.

South Dakota's School Transition to Employment Partnership (STEP) operates through the existing structure of education, job training (JTPA), and job placement (Job Service); and it includes instruction in three distinct course areas of employability (independent-living and decision-making skills; career development, and pre-employment and job-seeking skills; and job-keeping and work-responsibility skills). The program serves students who are dropouts, handicapped, economically disadvantaged, adjudicated delinquent, academically disadvantaged, or facing barriers to employment.

An extended-day program that serves dropouts and potential dropouts was reported in Raleigh, North Carolina. This program is an extension of the conventional program and provides students with the opportunity to earn a diploma. Students are identified through school recruitment efforts and through a school and community referral system. Hours of program operation vary from 10:00 A.M. to 8:30 P.M.; staffing may consist of regular day teachers, community volunteers, or retired teachers.

An example of a mainstream approach is the Fargo (North Dakota) South High School Individualized Learning Center (ILC). The ILC is a remedial/helping program designed to assist high-school students who are having academic difficulties. Not eligible for traditional special services, these students may fall "between the cracks" and drop out of school. The students participate in the ILC during their free school periods; the ILC is not a substitute for regular classroom instruction.

Two types of statewide programs were reported. Massachusetts's Chapter 188 Dropout Prevention Grant Program awards funds on a competitive basis to LEAs to develop and implement programs that better address the needs of students at risk of dropping out. State funding is restricted to programs serving students in grades seven through twelve, and priority is given to LEAs with high concentrations of students from low-income families. A prerequisite for funding is the formation of a local dropout-prevention advisory council to assist in program development and implementation. The council must include representatives of students, administrators, teachers, parents, institutions of higher education, community agencies, and labor.

School-Community Guidance Centers, administered by the Texas SEA, provide a variety of services designed to reduce the factors that contribute to truancy, academic failure, dropping out, and delinquency. The basic core of services includes instruction, counseling, home/school liaison, and follow-up. Each center has also developed a system for coordinating services with other agencies. State money for the centers is awarded competitively.

DROPOUT PREVENTION AT THE PRE-HIGH-SCHOOL LEVEL

A wide variety of activities was reported under this heading, including academic programs, programs of guidance and support, in-school suspension programs, and "Cities-in-Schools" programs.

The Appalachian Dropout Program, operating in the Attalla (Alabama) City School System, identifies potential dropouts in the fourth and fifth grades on the basis of below-grade-level performance, absenteeism, low achievement scores, and low grades. When students reach the sixth grade, they receive remediation, counseling, and vocational classes after school. The program runs through the sixth grade. Similarly, the Bradley County (Tennessee) Scholastic Study Skills Program is designed to identify the at-risk student and provide early intervention. The program thrust is threefold. First, the student is enrolled in an eight-week study skills lab. Second, the student participates in eight group and individual counseling sessions that address self-worth and attitudes about the school and community, and establish goals. Third, the student's parents participate in eight weekly sessions of parent-effectiveness training.

The Teaching the Real You (TRY) program in the Taylor County (West Virginia) schools is a special motivational program for students who are unable to cope with the regular school curriculum and/or the traditional classroom setting. The program serves potential dropouts and students with behavior problems; they spend half the day in an alternative setting and half the day in the regular middle-school setting. The program is a step between the regular school and the alternative school; its goal is to return the student to the regular mainstream program. The Cancryn Alternative Program in the Virgin Islands is another middle-school alternative program. Students referred to the program may exhibit underachievement, acting-out behavior, withdrawn behavior, high absenteeism, tardiness, signs of problems with authority or problems at home, poor self-image, or lack of motivation. The program seeks to provide a more appropriate atmosphere for these students by creating a sense of belonging, individualizing instruction, decreasing staff ratios, and providing experiential learning activities.

An example of a support program was provided by the AuSable Valley Central School District in Clintonville, New York. The Improving Student Attendance and Achievement Through Intervention of a Student Support/Home-School Liaison Committee is an improved system of guidance and pupil personnel support for targeted students and their parents. The program places heavy emphasis on personal counseling, home visitation, and open communication. Students are selected for the program on the basis of attendance records and staff recommendations. North Carolina provided a description of its statewide In-School Suspension Program. This program is designed for those students who need to be provided opportunities to develop the degree of self-discipline required to take advantage of the school's academic programs.

Philadelphia's adaptation of the national Cities-in-Schools (CIS) program is a coordinated school, city department, and community-based delivery system designed to meet the needs of students identified as being at risk of dropping out. The model includes the formation of a board of directors composed of key city decision makers—the school superintendent and representatives of the corporate sector, the department of justice, an institution of higher education, and the department of recreation. This board files for nonprofit status and provides the leadership and secures the funds necessary to achieve the goal of harnessing the city's services to better serve elementary-, middle-, and high-school youth. Each city puts its own stamp on the program. The program provides instruction, support services and motivational activities, career exploration and employment activities, and contact with the home.

PRESCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

Program descriptions included preschool and elementary-school at-risk programs that operate at the state and local levels. State programs included

Louisiana's At-Risk Program for four-year-olds, Maryland's Extended Elementary Education Program, and Oregon's Child Development Specialist Program. Louisiana's program is developmental in nature and is based upon child-initiated activities. Students are identified from Head Start waiting lists and from lists of siblings of Chapter 1 students, children from low-income families, and siblings of former program participants. Students are screened for participation; those who exhibit the greatest developmental lags are selected for the program.

Maryland's program for four-year-olds is provided in "at-risk" schools. Schools with third-grade reading comprehension scores at least six months below national norms are eligible. Any child residing in the school's attendance area may participate on a first-come, first-served basis. Program curriculum focuses on language and concept development and includes cross-grade staff communication and home-school cooperation activities. Oregon's Child Development Specialist Program places emphasis on kindergarten-through-grade-five programs. Child-development specialists, focusing on developmental student needs, work to reduce the incidence of learning problems that normally appear in the upper grades. The process emphasizes the development of a positive self-concept, the acquisition of skills in human relations, and the acceptance of responsibility as a prerequisite for academic learning.

Several examples of local early-childhood programs for at-risk students were provided. Montclair's (New Jersey) Cognitive Linguistic Intervention Program is designed to identify and provide services to at-risk preschool and kindergarten children who exhibit difficulties in cognitive or linguistic development. All services are delivered within the context of the regular classroom and use a transdisciplinary approach. The Columbus (Ohio) Public Schools Reading Recovery program is a thirty-minute, one-to-one intervention program for the poorest readers in first-grade classrooms. The program's goals are to reduce reading failure through early intervention and to help children become independent readers. The program supplements, but does not replace, regular teaching.

Project STAY (School to Aid Youth) operating in Moore, Oklahoma, is an early intervention dropout-prevention program that identifies and addresses the social, emotional, and academic needs of first-grade students. Referred and screened students remain in the program through the year, spending half the day in their regular classroom and half the day in the project. The program provides individual instruction in reading and mathematics, and students are helped to improve their self-concept and sense of worth. After the program, students are returned full time to the regular classroom.

Finally, in Williamsburg, Virginia, the Bright Beginnings program is a collaborative effort between the schools and the Colonial Services Board. The program serves about sixty at-risk children, from birth to age five, and their families. Services include classroom instruction, home visits, and sharing centers. Parent involvement is stressed through participation in program activities and through the program's advisory board.

FAMILY-LIFE PROGRAMS

Of the ten program descriptions provided by respondents that fall into the family-life category, all but two focused on pregnant students or dropouts; one focused on student "wellness" and one on drug abuse. The Gettysburg (Pennsylvania) Adolescent Parenting Program (GAPP), for example, provides pregnant students with the support, education, and assistance necessary to allow them to complete their education. The program includes formal course work; infant and toddler laboratories; social work, career counseling, and personal counseling; day care; and health-care services. Delaware's Wellness Program, a statewide program, is a kindergarten-through-grade-six package of curriculum materials that emphasize self-concept, physical fitness, interpersonal relationships, coping skills, etc. The Community-based Drug Prevention Program in Birmingham, Alabama, provides drug education and an in-house drug-education counselor at the high school.

SUMMARY

Sixty-nine examples of successful at-risk programs were submitted by the states. The large majority of the programs focused on dropout prevention, at either the high-school or pre-high-school level, and early-childhood education. A variety of program approaches exists within each type of program focus. For example, high-school dropout-prevention programs include alternative high schools or programs within schools, extended-day programs, and programs involving the business community. Dropout-prevention programs at the pre-high-school level included academic programs, programs of guidance and support, and in-school suspension programs.

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ELEMENTS OF A MODEL STATE STATUTE

To Provide Educational Entitlements for At-Risk Students

Council of Chief State School Officers

INTRODUCTION

At the annual meeting of the Council of Chief State School Officers in Asheville, North Carolina, in November 1987, the Council approved a policy statement, "Assuring School Success for Students At Risk." The policy statement refers to a model state statute prepared as an example of a way to implement the policy statement. The model statute, which follows, was not placed before the Council for approval or endorsement.

This model state statute is designed to provide effective assistance to students who are at risk of school failure. The statute is predicated upon the conviction that children coming from the most impoverished circumstances have the ability to learn and to succeed. It is also based upon the belief that state legislators have a pivotal role to play in establishing a legal framework for successful public education.

Part I of the model statute sets forth in the form of legislative findings some of the facts that give rise to nationwide concern about children left behind in public school systems. It also states the legislative objective—to provide each child with educational and related services calculated to enable that child to complete high school successfully and to become a productive and responsible citizen.

Part II calls for preschool child-development programs to be made available to three- and four-year-old children who are at risk of educational failure. These are defined as low-income children and children who do not speak or comprehend the English language.

Part III first defines the concept of "at-riskness" for children at various stages of their public-school careers. For the earlier stages, the definition is largely income based; later it is based on school performance. Flexibility is built in by enabling school officials to identify all students who are in need of assistance.

The broad entitlement of the model statute is for all children, but special measures are called for in Part III for students at risk of educational failure. They are of three kinds:

1. *Promising Practices*—This Section recommends that schools follow practices with regard to the employment of teachers, the use of instructional strategies, textbooks, and facilities, and the parental involvement that are generally regarded as necessary for successful education. These may be regarded as *input* measures.

2. *Environment for Successful Education*—To ensure students such an environment, this Section builds *choice* into public education by permitting at-risk students to transfer out of schools that do not provide an environment for successful education into schools that do. The criterion for such an environment is the proportion of students in the school who are meeting a standard of adequate performance. In that sense, this Section may be read as having an *output* measure.

3. *Individual and School Plans*—This Section is designed to call attention to the individual needs of students who are at risk and to identify their needs for educational and related services. It is also designed to establish a process for identifying systemic failures in schools. It is a *process-related* measure.

Part IV of the model statute establishes an entitlement for young people who have dropped out of school and are beyond the age of compulsory attendance (generally those who are sixteen through twenty) to re-enroll in school. State and local education agencies are called upon to develop educational programs geared to the needs of these re-enrolling students—programs that may be provided in the public schools or in alternative settings.

Part V specifies measures for implementation and enforcement, including data collection, monitoring, technical assistance, fiscal incentives, and administrative and court remedies. It also calls upon state departments and agencies that perform functions related to the purposes of the model statute to cooperate with the State Education Agency. While the entitlements specified in the statute are legal in nature, the remedies provided are designed to secure compliance without lengthy litigation. Flexibility is built in, for example, in the call for the use of alternative forms of dispute resolution. Nevertheless, state agencies would be empowered to take strong measures in cases of persistent noncompliance. Here, as elsewhere in the statute, provisions are modeled on the experiences of various states.

PART I

PREAMBLE—LEGISLATIVE GOALS

Suggested Language

The purpose of this statute is

1. *to provide each child with educational and related services reasonably calculated to enable the child to achieve his or her potential, to become a productive member of society, and to undertake the responsibilities of citizenship.*

Alternative Language

The purpose of this statute is

2. *to provide each child with educational and related services reasonably calculated to lead to successful completion of a high-school education.*
3. *to assure that each child at risk of educational failure is provided at the earliest possible time with educational and related services that are geared to his or her specific needs and that are reasonably calculated to lead to successful completion of a high-school education.*
4. *to provide each child with educational and related services reasonably calculated to lead to successful completion of a high-school education, so that the child may fulfill his or her potential, become a productive member of society, and undertake the responsibilities of citizenship.*

Comments: The major purpose of stating legislative goals is to set the tone for what follows. The preamble also may be of help in resolving questions of legislative interpretation that arise in the body of the statute.[1]

The alternative formulations contain some differences of emphasis or nuance. For example, (1) differs from (3) in that it is stated in terms of the rights of all children, while (3) is targeted at children who are defined as "at-risk." While the operative effect is the same, (1) may be preferable because its terms are inclusive and it does not appear to be special-interest legislation.

In addition, (1) differs from (2) in that (1) expands on the definition of the ultimate goal. Alternative (4) combines (1) and (2).

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[1] A spirited discussion has taken place over the years about the weight to be given to preamble language. In an early English case, Justice Dyer said that ". . . the preamble of the act is to be considered . . . a key to open the minds of the makers of the act, and the mischief which they intended to redress." See Stowel v. Lord Zorich, 1 Plowden 353, 369, 75 Eng. Rep. 536 (1569). While United States jurists are more restrained in their view of preambles, they do regard preamble language as an aid to defining legislative intent. See, for example, Beard v. Rowlan, 34 U. S. 301, 317 (1835).

All of the phrases used are broad and imprecise. "Successful completion of a high-school education" does not have the same meaning in every state, because of differences in state education codes or regulations. One reason for preferring the broader definition in (1) is that many holders of high-school diplomas, who are deemed to have "successfully completed" their education, nonetheless lack basic skills. Without these skills, they cannot "achieve their potential," become "productive members of society" or "undertake the responsibilities of citizenship."

It is important to note that under all formulations, the entitlement is not to an end product, but to "educational and related services" calculated to reach the goal.

There are other possible types of formulations of goals. For example, one could state things much more narrowly and in negative terms—that the objective is to lower dropout rates and other manifestations of school failure. While that may be a pragmatic approach in some states, it does not do real justice to the objective here. At the other end of the spectrum, one could state the goal in a more results-oriented way, for example, "to assure that children attending public schools secure the skills they need to become productive members of society." That kind of statement puts less emphasis on "inputs," or services that will produce the result, than on the result itself. While it may do more to convey the notion of an entitlement, it will not ultimately be helpful. It probably would spur the filing of more damage actions against school systems by parents of students who did not achieve functional literacy. In any event, the specific entitlements must be stated in the body of the statute.

Preamble—Legislative Findings

Comments: Findings in legislation are the means by which the chief sponsors of a bill state the case for the bill in the terms they believe will be most compelling to their colleagues and to the public. There also are some instances in which legislative findings may serve a more important role—for example, in defending legislation against constitutional attack.[2]

It is suggested that the model statute contain findings of various kinds from which legislators may choose. They would include the following points:

A. Objective description of conditions that give rise to the legislation.

Example 1. *Public school systems face a formidable and continuing challenge in meeting the educational needs of children at risk of school failure.*

(a) *One child in four under the age of six in the United States lives below the poverty line.*

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[2] For example, a racially based affirmative-action statute may better be defended against a constitutional challenge if there is a legislative finding that racial discrimination existed in the past and that the statute's remedies are needed to eliminate the vestiges of such discrimination.

(b) *Nearly 60 percent of children born in 1983 will live with only one parent before the age of eighteen; 90 percent of these children will live in households headed by females; and a majority of these households will have incomes under $10,000.*

(c) *Increasing numbers of children whose parents have migrated from other nations enter the public schools without proficiency in the English language. Unless steps are taken to address their educational needs, the risks of school failure for children living in these conditions are very high.*

Example 2. *Despite the progress that public school systems have made, the rates of school failure remain extremely high.*

(a) *More than one-quarter of the nation's youth do not finish high school. Many who do graduate and enroll in postsecondary institutions are in need of remedial reading and writing courses.*

(b) *Nearly 13 percent of seventeen-year-old students still enrolled in school are functionally illiterate. Among students who drop out, about 60 percent are functionally illiterate.*[3]

B. Findings about the harm to the individual, the state, and the nation that flows from allowing high rates of school failure to persist.

Example 1. *Failure to address effectively the basic-skills deficiencies and high dropout rates of at-risk children will severely limit this state's productive capacity, economic growth, and potential.*

C. Positive findings about the importance of educational initiatives directed toward children at risk to their full development as individuals and to the economic health and well-being of the state and the nation.

D. Findings establishing links or causation between the measures contained in the model legislation and school success.

Example 1. *Research and experience have shown that children at risk of school failure derive short- and long-term benefits from preschool programs.*

Example 2. *Research and experience have shown that an environment for the successful education of all students is more likely to be established in public school systems that do not concentrate large groups of at-risk students in one school.*

Example 3. *Research and experience have shown that children succeed in schools that have appropriately certified and trained staff; that adopt and pursue systematic instructional strategies; that use appropriate and up-to-date textbooks, materials, and*

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[3] State legislators may want to substitute statewide figures, if available, for national statistics.

equipment; that conduct educational programs in facilities that are clean and safe; that involve parents in all facets of their child's education; and that are offered the opportunity and flexibility to do their own planning and setting of goals. There exists a pressing need to establish these conditions for successful education at many more public schools.

Example 4. *Plans that address the needs of individual children and plans that address systemic problems within a school can prove useful means of improving children's school performance.*

PART II

ENTITLEMENT TO PARTICIPATION IN CHILD-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

A. Entitlement

Suggested Language

Each school district shall make available to all preschool children within its jurisdiction who are at risk of school failure the opportunity to participate in a child-development program that is reasonably calculated to provide preparation for successful participation in public schools. This program should be offered at least half days during the regular school year.

B. Eligibility

Suggested Language

1. *A child shall be deemed at risk of school failure and eligible to participate under Section A if*
   (a) *he or she is member of a household or family whose income is at or below the poverty level under criteria used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in compiling the most recent decennial census, or*
   (b) *he or she is unable to speak or comprehend the English language.*

2. *A child who is at risk of school failure under B(1) shall be eligible to participate in the program if the child will reach his or her third or fourth birthday in the school year in which the program is offered.*

Comments on Entitlement and Eligibility: There are a number of things to note. First, the obligation is placed on each school district to make available a child-development program. Second, participation by parents is voluntary. Third, no exception is made for school districts (as is the case under some statutes) that have only minimal numbers of students who fit the definition of "at-risk." Note that the district's obligation is to "make available" a program, not necessarily to operate one. A district with a minimal number of students may fulfill its obligation by contracting with a private agency, provided that the private agency meets the standards described later in the model statute and in regulations promulgated by the State Education Agency.

The eligibility criteria are more thorny. The prime standard—being a child of poverty—is drawn from the Texas statute. The main difference is that the Texas law would have the poverty or subsistence level defined by the State Education Agency, while the model statute provides for use of Census Bureau criteria. The latter is based on the formulation used in Chapter I of the Education Consolidation Improvement Act of 1981. The problem with state-drawn standards of poverty is that many states will yield to the temptation to set the standard to fit available resources. On the other hand, if a federal standard is used, an appropriate technique may be needed for adjusting for regional differences in the cost of living.

The second criterion—English-language deficiency—also is drawn from the Texas statute. It describes a widespread condition that is not completely correlated with poverty (since many new immigrant families are not poor), but that is widely regarded as a significant indicator of potential school failure.[4]

An alternative formulation would be to base eligibility in whole or in part on tests to determine school readiness, an approach that has been used in some states. This approach is not favored, however, because of concerns about the reliability of methods of determining school readiness. A statewide testing program to ascertain the school readiness of three- and four-year-olds runs the risk of labeling children. Even if participation is voluntary, the risks outweigh the value of such tests as a diagnostic tool.

Another way to go about setting eligibility standards would be to try to identify other characteristics of "at-riskness" that are appropriate for young children. One could add to poverty other socioeconomic characteristics such as the level of education of parents—for example, "children without a parent or guardian who completed high school." While the latter standard (along with others) may be a good predictor of potential school failure, the danger in listing multiple criteria lies in making the statute too complex and, in the process, omitting inadvertently other criteria that may be important.

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[4] English-language deficiencies, of course, may arise not only from foreign birth but also from disabling conditions. Although they are clearly at risk, handicapped children are not included in this Title or in other sections of the model state statute because a comprehensive set of entitlements for them is contained in federal law (P.L. 94–142). As amended, this law calls for the provision of similar services for preschool handicapped children by 1992. PL 99–457, enacted on October 8, 1986, authorizes preschool grants for serving handicapped children aged three to five. According to the House Committee report, states currently are serving more than 75 percent of all handicapped children aged three to five, and with the new federal grant, the Committee expects that *all* eligible children will be served by 1991–92.

One other important issue of eligibility is whether children who are not at risk should be eligible to participate in child-development programs. The advantages of such broad participation are numerous. If child-development programs come to be regarded as an integral part of public education, the removal of restrictions on eligibility would be consonant with the broad purpose of the model statute—to provide a basic educational entitlement to all children.

Furthermore, the experience of the Head Start program, which reserves some slots for children who are not income-eligible, strongly suggests that broad participation is important in avoiding socioeconomic and racial isolation and in reaping the educational benefits of integration at an early age.

Despite these important factors weighing in favor of universal participation, considerations of cost and practicality led to a decision to restrict eligibility initially to children deemed at risk, that is, mainly children in poverty. The needs of these children are so great that it would be inadvisable for states to defer action while seeking the financial resources for a universal program.[5]

A compromise approach would be to model the statute after Chapter 1 and establish child-development programs in schools that are Chapter-1-eligible. The advantage would be to create programs in which there is at least some socioeconomic diversity; but disadvantages would flow from the abandonment of the child-based eligibility approach that is used elsewhere throughout this model statute. An approach based on school characteristics would be favored. The principal problems are those of need and equity. If a particular school would need minimum numbers of poor children before establishing a program, a significant number of at-risk children would not be served.[6]

Accordingly, it is recommended that states move in stages to establish a child-development program, acting first to make such a program available to children most in need and then, as rapidly as resources can be secured, extending the benefits to all three- and four-year-olds.

C. Content and Implementation

Suggested Language

1. *The State Education Agency shall promulgate regulations to govern the imple-*

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[5] It is clear that programs involving the participation of all three- and four-year-olds would be costly. Currently, participation in existing child-development programs is determined largely by ability to pay. In families with incomes of less than $10,000, fewer than one three-year-old in five and fewer than two four-year-olds in five are enrolled in preschool programs. As family income increases significantly, larger proportions of children in these age groups are enrolled in such programs.

[6] Another compromise approach might be to make eligibility for child-development programs universal but to establish a fee schedule for parents able to afford it. Such an approach could set an undesirable precedent for chipping away at the basic concept of a free public education. A variation on this approach would be to make poverty the prime determinant of eligibility but to make a limited number of seats available to children who are not income-eligible and whose parents are willing to pay a fee. (Under Head Start, 10 percent of the slots are available to such children.) Such an approach might be justified as an interim measure leading to universal participation.

mentation of child-development programs by local education agencies. The SEA shall set standards in the following areas:

(a) *Programs appropriate for the three- and four-year-old children enrolled in the program. Programs shall emphasize language, communication, and social skills that are developmentally appropriate for three- and four-year-olds and that are important to successful participation in kindergarten and grade-one educational programs.*
(b) *Methods to facilitate the involvement of parents, including outreach to assure dissemination of information about the program and assistance to parents in working with their children at home.*
(c) *Appropriate child-to-staff ratios and group sizes.*
(d) *Appointment and in-service training of teachers and paraprofessionals with appropriate qualifications in child development.*
(e) *Access without cost to transportation appropriate for this age group.*
(f) *Coordination with other public and private human-service agencies to assure diagnosis and treatment of conditions that place children at risk of school failure.*

2. *The standards promulgated by the State Education Agency under Section C(1) shall also apply to any other private or public agency that conducts a child-development program pursuant to this Part under contract with a local education agency. The State Education Agency shall promulgate such additional standards governing agencies that conduct child-development programs under contract with local education agencies as the SEA deems necessary and appropriate to assure the health, safety, and well-being of children participating in the program.*

Comments on Content and Implementation: The second sentence of Subsection (a) represents an effort to provide general guidance on the type of preschool development program we seek. The legislation does not intend that public education funds should be used to establish statewide day-care facilities, nor does it intend that children should be crammed full of information at an early age. Rather, the program should be designed to provide readiness skills that most middle-class children have acquired by the time they enter school but that many low-income children lack.[7]

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[7] The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) reported in 1986 that since 1983, thirteen states have passed legislation authorizing some type of state preschool appropriation or expanding an existing program. A perusal of state statutes that the CDF regards as the best (including Michigan, Massachusetts, and Washington) reveals that scant attention has been paid in the text of the laws to the content or objectives of preschool programs. The Washington statute speaks of a program to assist eligible children "with educational, social, health, nutritional, and cultural development to enhance their opportunity for success in the common school system." CDF, in identifying "crucial elements" of a high-quality program, speaks of "providing an age-appropriate curriculum, as opposed to simply adjusting the kindergarten program downward."

Subsection (c) calls for appropriate staffing ratios. A 1986 report of the Early Childhood Education Commission of New York City suggests class sizes of no more than twenty children with two adults.

Subsection (e) calls for provision of free transportation. This contrasts with the Texas statute, which specifically disavows an obligation to provide transportation. Most other statutes appear to be silent on the subject. Free transportation would appear to be essential if the notion of entitlement is to have meaning.

Subsection (f) calls for setting standards for coordination with other public and private human-service agencies. Such coordination should help to assure that health and nutrition problems that often impede successful participation in educational programs do not go untended. (The New York City Commission identifies as one element of high-quality education programs "health, vision, hearing, and dental screening, and referral to direct health care.") In addition, such coordination should facilitate assistance to families with other problems that pose barriers to successful education.

It might also be argued that a statute should make provision for the construction or renovation of facilities where suitable space is not otherwise available. But such a provision would have the potential of adding major costs to the program, and a school district with classroom shortages does have the option of contracting out.

It should be noted that this draft does not place limitations on the circumstances under which a district may contract with private agencies, but rather provides for the establishment of standards that contractors must meet. Also, as noted previously, the draft is not geared to individual schools, but to the obligation of the local education agency (LEA), which would be free to establish programs at each school, establish child-development centers that would serve several schools, or make some other arrangement. The principal reason for this is that differentiating between schools for purposes of funding is not consistent with the idea of entitlement, which is fundamental to the model statute.

A couple of final notes on this Section. Several recent state statutes specify that the preschool program will be one-half day in duration. In the District of Columbia, about 75 percent of the programs operate on a full-day schedule. The model statute adopts the formulation in the South Carolina Education Reform Act, which provides that the program operate "at least half a day" (for four-year-olds).

There was some discussion of whether to add a third subsection mandating the establishment of all-day kindergarten as a logical step if half-day programs are to be created for three- and four-year-olds. While all-day kindergartens were generally viewed as desirable, they were not viewed as central to the purposes of the model statute. Concern was also expressed that in the competition for financial resources, all-day kindergartens might be weighed against child-development programs for three- and four-year-olds, a need that is regarded as more pressing.

PART III

ENTITLEMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

A. Definition

Suggested Language

Terms requiring definition such as "student at risk," "promising practices," and "environment for successful education" are defined in the succeeding sections of this Part in which the terms are used.

B. Entitlement of Students

Suggested Language

1. *Each student enrolled in a public school operated by a local education agency is entitled to be provided with educational and related services reasonably calculated to lead to successful completion of a high-school education.*
2. *Each LEA is responsible for identifying in a timely manner under the standards set forth in Section C of this Part students at risk of not completing successfully their high-school education (hereinafter referred to as "students at risk").*
3. *Each LEA is responsible for initiating for students identified as at risk under Section C of this Part special measures to enable the students to realize the entitlement stated in B(1). Such special measures shall include*
   - (a) *the adoption of promising educational practices (as further specified in Section D of this Part).*
   - (b) *the provision of access to a school environment in which successful education is taking place (as further specified in Section E of this Part).*
   - (c) *the development of individual teaching and learning plans (ITLPs) geared to a student's educational needs and needs for related services, and the development of schoolwide plans designed to identify and redress systemic problems in a school (as further specified in Section F of this Part).*

C. Definition of At-Risk Students: Eligibility for Special Measures

Suggested Language

1. *A student enrolled in kindergarten through third grade shall be deemed at risk and eligible for special measures provided in this Part if*
   - (a) *he or she is a member of a household or family whose income is at or below the poverty level under criteria used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in compiling the most recent decennial census, or*

(b) *he or she has not made substantial progress in mastering basic skills that are appropriate for students of his or her age, or*

(c) *he or she has been determined to be at risk by the school principal after consultation with his or her parent or guardian. The principal's determination shall be based on an assessment by school staff familiar with the student that he or she has health, social, or family problems that are impairing his or her ability to succeed in school.*

2. *A student enrolled in grades four through twelve shall be deemed at risk and eligible for special measures provided in this Part if*

(a) 1) *in those states using statewide criterion-referenced examinations, he or she scores lower than the appropriate level of performance set by the state below which a student cannot be expected to progress adequately and complete high school successfully.*

2) *in those states using statewide norm-referenced examinations, he or she scores lower on the examination than a standard of performance established by the state. To establish the standard, the state shall first identify criteria of learning required to make adequate progress in schools and then shall review the content and difficulty of the examination to identify those aspects of the examination (such as subskills or objectives) and the level of performance that indicate that the criteria have been met.*

3) *in those states using statewide competency examinations for high-school promotion or graduation, he or she fails the examination.*

(b) *notwithstanding satisfactory performance on statewide examinations, he or she has failed to meet the school's standards for promotion and has been retained in grade for one or more years.*

(c) *he or she has at any time been a school dropout or has had unexcused absences of twenty or more days during a calendar year.*

(d) *he or she has been determined to be at risk by the school principal after consultation with his or her parent or guardian. The principal's determination shall be based on an assessment by school staff familiar with the student that he or she has health, social, or family problems that are impairing his or her ability to succeed in school. Such problems may include but are not limited to evidence of abuse of the student by a family member or the student's use of alcohol or drugs, pregnancy or parenthood, delinquent behavior, or attempted suicide.*

Comments on Eligibility: The draft sets out a three-tier system for defining students at risk, with different eligibility standards for three- and four-year-olds, students from kindergarten to grade three, and students from grades four to twelve.

For preschool students and those from kindergarten to grade three, family poverty is a primary standard because it has been found to be a significant predictor of school failure. The family-poverty criterion is dropped after grade three, when there are more concrete manifestations of school failure to rely on.[8]

A second major criterion is educational readiness. This is expressed in different ways at each level. At ages three and four, it could be a "predicted" deficiency in school "readiness," although, as noted, such a standard has problems and is not recommended. At the primary level, it is failure "to master basic skills," which may be evidenced by tests, grades, and/or lack of promotion. After that, it is performance below a standard established by the state and geared to successful completion of high school.

Substandard performance may be gauged in various ways, depending on the types of statewide tests that are used. For criterion-referenced tests, the cutoff point would be the score below which a student is not expected to progress adequately and to complete high school successfully. For norm-referenced tests, the task of establishing a cutoff is somewhat more complex. It cannot be those students falling below the 50th or some other lower percentile because if students are compared only with each other, a group that is fixed in number will always be deemed "at-risk." For example, if the definition of students at risk is all those who score below the 33rd percentile on a particular test, then one-third of the students—by definition—are below the 33rd percentile. The number of at-risk students is fixed, regardless of the success of a school district's efforts to improve skills.

Any tenable definition must contemplate significant reductions in the number of at-risk students as the measures called for in the legislation take effect. Accordingly 2(a)(2) calls for states that use norm-referenced examinations to determine criteria for satisfactory performance and then to establish cutoff scores based on the criteria. As student performance improves, larger and larger numbers of students may be expected to exceed the cutoff score.

States may continue to use norm-referenced tests for a variety of purposes, but an external or absolute measure of performance will be employed to identify students at risk and to gauge improvements.

In those few states, for example, Ohio, that do not employ statewide examinations of any kind, identification of students at risk because of substandard performance can be made through use of local standards. Apart from their performance on statewide tests, students may evidence a lack of satisfactory performance through classroom failure that results in retention in grade.

Although it is arguable that the criteria previously cited are sufficient, additional standards are employed, primarily on grounds that "at-risk" means a predictive (not just an extant) condition. There may be other reliable early-warning signs for students who have not yet experienced educational failure.

Thus, a third criterion employed for students at the level of grades four to twelve is lack of participation—being dropouts or truants.

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[8] Language deficiency is also subsumed in performance criteria after preschool.

The fourth and final criterion is a discretionary determination made by the principal, after consultation with parents or guardians, that a child is at risk because of "health, social, or family problems." The difference at the fourth-to-twelfth-grade level is that several problems, for example, alcohol or drug involvement and pregnancy, are among the bases for a principal's determination.

This approach differs from one state's statute that lists parenthood and adjudicated delinquency as categorical conditions. Such an approach was not used for a couple of reasons. First, our aim is to develop a generic, partly process-oriented approach to educational failure and to emphasize the notion of entitlement. To isolate and specify particular conditions could well lead to a series of categorical programs (e.g., "dropout prevention," "pregnancy prevention") that, while useful, would not satisfy the real needs. Further, no laundry list of conditions could be exhaustive. Some states focus on deviant behavior by students. Yet other conditions (e.g., family tragedy or breakup, or child abuse) may put a student at risk without the student having yet actually failed or engaged in deviant behavior. The system for identifying students ought to be flexible enough to take such conditions into account. For this reason discretionary authority is given to the principal. At the same time, the process gives responsibility to teachers, counselors, and the principal to assess the individual conditions of students, which is consistent with other overall approaches of the statute.

D. Promising Practices

Suggested Language

In implementing the duties specified in III B(3)(a), each LEA shall assure that its practices and programs include

1. *appropriately certified and trained staff;*
2. *the adoption of systematic instructional strategies that:*
   - (a) *have been demonstrated to be effective or that show promise of being effective;*
   - (b) *are designed to assist at-risk children in mastering the same skills and knowledge expected of all students; and*
   - (c) *are designed to assure coordination and integration of programs to assist at-risk children with the entire educational program;*
3. *the use of appropriate and up-to-date textbooks, materials, and equipment;*
4. *the conduct of educational programs in facilities that are clean and safe;*
5. *the involvement of parents or other primary care-givers in all facets of their children's education; and*
6. *a system of school-based administration that encourages goal setting at each school and affords scope for innovation within the broad limits of policies established by the LEA.*

Comments on Promising Practices: The purpose of this section is to identify the basic components of an effective educational program. In other words, the effort is to describe the elements that almost all educators agree are important in enabling students to complete their high-school education successfully.

While some may say that the six components described above are so basic that they are not appropriately characterized as "special measures" in III B(3), there is widespread evidence that in the public schools throughout the nation attended by large numbers of at-risk children, one or more of these elements of an effective educational program is lacking. Accordingly, what is "special" about these measures is the effort to assure their implementation by stating them in the form of an entitlement capable of being enforced.

Further, it is contemplated that SEAs will add guidelines or policy statements to the Section. What follows is merely illustrative of ways in which SEAs may choose to flesh out the requirement that promising practices be adopted.

1. *Appropriately certified and trained staff.* The SEA may identify the elements of a comprehensive personnel development program including in-service training of instructional and support personnel. It may seek to deal with the problems created by the disproportionate use of uncertificated or substitute teachers at schools with large numbers of at-risk students.

2. *The adoption of systematic instructional strategies.* The use of the term "systematic instructional strategies" is intended to emphasize the importance of planned rather than *ad hoc* instructional methods. Planning is contemplated not only at the district level but at each school, through the leadership of principals and groups of teachers who have the authority and responsibility to initiate and maintain school improvements.

   Guidelines may emphasize the consensus among educators that teachers' holding and communicating high expectations for student learning have been the key to improving the achievement levels of at-risk students. Other matters that may be addressed include the establishment of learning sequences in which each step is mastered without arbitrary time limits before moving on to the next, the establishment of pupil-teacher ratios that permit more attention to the needs of at-risk students, the adoption of cooperative learning strategies, and the use of peer tutoring.

   Subsection 2(b) underlines the importance of high teacher expectations by establishing the standard that at-risk children are expected to master the same skills and knowledge as children who are not deemed to be at risk. Those should include skills of comprehension, analysis, problem solving, and decision making.

   Subsection 2(c) is intended to make clear the importance of strategies that avoid isolation within the schools of children deemed to be at risk. Section E of this Part ("Environment for Successful Education") is based upon research demonstrating that at-risk children benefit from attending *schools* at which a large proportion of the student body is performing satisfactorily. These benefits are lost if children deemed to be at risk are separated from others in *classrooms* for substantial parts of the school day.

It should be emphasized, however, that the aim of this subsection is not to dictate or to impel SEAs to dictate the adoption of a particular methodology. Rather, state legislatures would be calling upon state or local agencies to engage in a continuing quest for instructional strategies that produce success for at-risk students, to be flexible and adaptable enough to make needed changes, and to be resolute enough to assure that methodologies that do work are extended to the largest number of children.

3. *The use of appropriate and up-to-date textbooks.* This subsection is intended to deal with the problems created by the use of out-of-date textbooks, materials, supplies, and equipment or the lack of up-to-date equipment such as computers that often affect disproportionately schools with large numbers of at-risk children. Texts that are appropriate as well as up-to-date take into account the rich cultural diversity of the nation and relate curriculum to the material on which students are tested.

4. *Facilities that are clean and safe.* Safety in this subsection refers both to the establishment of conditions free from environmental or health hazards (e.g., asbestos, lead-based paint) and to conditions of physical security in which school officials have taken all reasonable steps to guard students and staff against assault.

5. *The involvement of parents.* This subsection draws on the considerable body of research and experience demonstrating that the interest and involvement of parents is a key factor in the educational success of their children. Again, the intent is not to mandate a specific set of practices. Rather, this reflects the growing understanding that failure of school systems to involve and consult parents is a barrier to effective education as much as are unqualified teachers, inadequate texts, and unsafe facilities. SEAs may encourage LEAs to regard involvement of parents as itself an effective teaching practice and to plan systematic efforts to bring parents into the process of teaching their children.

6. *A system of school-based administration.* As educators increasingly have noted, permitting flexibility at the school level in developing the means for implementing broad state and local policies is an important element in any overall strategy to improve opportunity for at-risk students. (See Patricia A. Graham, "Achievement for At-Risk Students," in this book.)

Finally, it should be noted that in various contexts, federal courts have recognized the need for the use of "promising practices." This is explicit or implicit in federal statutes such as the Education of All Handicapped Children

Act and the Bilingual Education Act.[9] Here, however, the hope is that content will be provided principally through policies and guidelines adopted by SEAs and the positive response of LEAs.

E. Environment for Successful Education

Suggested Language

1. *For purposes of implementing the duties specified in III B(3)(b), an LEA shall be deemed not to be providing a school environment in which successful education is taking place at any school in which more than 25 percent of the students enrolled in grades kindergarten through three are not making substantial progress in mastering basic skills as defined in III C(1)(b) or in which more than 25 percent of the students enrolled in grades four through twelve are not meeting the appropriate levels of performance as defined in III C(2)(a) and (b).*
2. *No later than two years from the effective date of this Act, each LEA shall have provided an environment in which successful education is taking place, as defined in (1) above, at all schools within its jurisdiction, provided, however, that a school shall not be deemed to be out of compliance if, notwithstanding its failure to meet the 25 percent criterion, it has reduced by at least 10 percent the proportion of students whose performance failed to meet standards during the two-year period and if it continues to reduce the proportion by at least 5 percent in each succeeding year.*
3. *Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsections (1) and (2) in this Section, no school shall be deemed to be providing an environment in which successful education is taking place if after the effective date of this Act, the completion rate for the school decreases by more than 3 percent in any two-year period.*
4. *Two years from the effective date of this Act, each at-risk student who is attending a school that is not providing an environment for successful education as defined in Subsections (1) and (2) shall be entitled to transfer to a school at which such an environment is being provided. The right of transfer shall apply to schools within the jurisdiction of the LEA offering the appropriate level of education. To the extent that the rights of students to transfer to schools providing environments for successful education cannot be effectuated fully because more than 25 percent of students in the district as a whole are not meeting the standards described in Subsections (1) and (2), the SEA shall make arrangements for interdistrict transfers similar to those that provide for interdistrict cooperation under other provisions of state law.*

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[9] As to the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, see, for example, Campbell v. Talladega County Board of Education, 518 F. Supp. 47 (N. D. Ala. 1981); Roncker v. Walter, 700 F.2d 1058 (6th Cir. 1983), *cert. denied*, 104 S. Ct. 196 (1983). As to the Bilingual Education Act, see Castenada v. Pickard, 648 F.2s 989, 1009–1010 (1981).

5. *Each student who transfers to a school providing an environment for successful education under the provisions of Subsection (4) shall be entitled to complete his or her education through the highest grade of that school. Each transfer student whose residence is so distant from the transfer school as to call for free transportation under state or local policy shall be provided with such transportation.*
6. *Each LEA shall take appropriate steps, including the allocation of additional resources, to assure that schools that receive student transfers under Subsection (3) above continue to be schools that provide an environment for successful education.*

Comments on Environment for Successful Education: This Section is intended primarily to furnish meaningful options to students whose schools are not providing environments conducive to learning.

The standard chosen for defining schools with successful learning environments—the proportion of children who are making satisfactory academic progress—is based on the extensive research that demonstrates that at-risk children benefit from attending schools in which a large proportion of the student body is performing satisfactorily. The 25-percent criterion is used as a minimum standard, taking into account that in some districts the percentage of students not making adequate academic progress is so large that attainment of a higher standard within a two-year period may not be realistic. Additional flexibility is built into the standard by treating schools that do not meet the 25-percent criterion as being in compliance as long as they make steady progress (at the rate of at least 5 percent a year) toward that goal. States are encouraged, however, to set a higher standard where such a standard is attainable by the districts within their jurisdictions.

Subsection (3) provides that a school that would otherwise be considered to be furnishing a successful learning environment will lose that status if it has a significant increase in its dropout rate. While the dropout rate at such a school may be expected to increase somewhat with the transfer of at-risk children, limits should be set on such an increase. Further, the establishment of criteria related to completion rates will guard against schools achieving or preserving their status as "successful schools" by encouraging students who are not making satisfactory progress to drop out.

The right of transfer under Subsection (4) would take effect only after LEAs have had a two-year grace period in which to bring schools into compliance. The primary right would be to transfer to another school designated by the LEA within its jurisdiction that meets the standard of providing an environment for successful education. Where, however, the entitlement cannot be effectuated fully within the district, Subsection (4) calls upon the SEA to provide for interdistrict transfers. The arrangements for such transfers could be similar to provisions that most states have for interdistrict cooperation for a variety of purposes, such as meeting the needs of children with certain special-education needs. This aspect of the statute is similar to Colorado's "second chance" program, which permits high-school students who have not succeeded to transfer to other districts to participate in programs geared to their needs. Other states that have relevant laws providing choices for students include Arizona, Massachusetts, Oregon, Vermont, and Wisconsin. (See *A Time for Results*, National Governors' Association, 1986, pp. 76–78.)

Finally, Subsection (6) is designed to guard against the danger that schools that are providing environments for successful education may lose that status with the transfer of large numbers of at-risk students. Obviously, an LEA would not be free to permit so many transfers as would place the receiving school in statutory noncompliance. Beyond this, however, the Section calls upon the LEA to allocate additional resources to receiving schools so that they will be able to meet the needs of transferring students and continue to provide an environment for the successful education of all students. Such resources may, for example, include additional counselors and reading specialists.

F. Individual Teaching and Learning and Schoolwide Plans

Suggested Language

For purposes of implementing the duties specified in Section B(3)(c) of this Part:

1. *Individualized Teaching and Learning Plan. Two years after the effective date of this Act,*
   - (a) *the principal of each school that meets the criteria for providing an environment for successful education specified in Section E of this Part shall arrange for the preparation of an individual teaching and learning plan (ITLP) for all students enrolled in the school who are determined to be at risk under Section C(2) of the Part.*
   - (b) *the principal of each school that fails to meet the criteria for providing an environment for successful education specified in Section E of this Part shall arrange for the preparation of an ITLP for all students enrolled in the school who are determined to be at risk under Section C(2) of this Part whose parents or other primary care-givers request the preparation of an ITLP.*
   - (c) *ITLPs developed under Subsections (a) or (b) of this Section shall be prepared in consultation with the student's parents or other primary care-givers and shall contain the following:*
     - 1) *an assessment of the current educational performance of the student and of the aspects of that performance that place the student at risk;*
     - 2) *a brief description of the instructional strategies and educational services that will be implemented to improve the performance of the student; and*
     - 3) *an identification of related health, nutritional, or other social services needed by the student and of the agency or agencies to which the student is being referred for the provision of such services.*
   - (d) *The principal of the school in which the student is enrolled shall designate a teacher or other staff member to review annually with the student and his*

parents the progress being made by the student and to make any necessary adjustments in the ITLP. When the student is determined to be no longer at risk under III C(2), the ITLP shall be kept on file, but no further adjustments need be made.

2. *Schoolwide plans. Two years after the effective date of this Act, the principal of each school that fails to meet the criteria for providing an environment for successful education specified in Section E of this Part shall arrange for the preparation of a schoolwide plan. The plan shall be prepared after consultation with teachers, other school staff, and parents. The plan shall identify the promising practices adopted by the LEA under Section D of this Part and detail the means used to implement these practices in the school. Further, it shall evaluate progress made in implementing promising practices, identify deficiencies in the means employed, and specify changes that will be adopted to secure greater progress in the future. A copy of the plan shall be transmitted to the LEA with any requests for additional support or technical assistance needed to implement the goals contained in the plan. Copies of the plan shall also be made available to teachers, other staff, and parents (or other primary care-givers) of children enrolled in the school.*

Comments on Individual Teaching and Schoolwide Plans: The purpose of the ITLP is to establish a process that will focus attention by school officials on the specific individual needs of students who have been determined to be at risk. It should be emphasized that the process is not intended to be bureaucratic or unduly burdensome to any of the participants. Rather, it is to assure that the relevant questions will be asked about why an individual student is at risk and what practical measures may be adopted to improve the student's performance. If ITLPs turn out to be documents that use boilerplate language and that occupy the time of school staff to no productive end, the purpose of this Section will have been defeated.

Subsection (c)(3) reflects an awareness that important causes of educational failure frequently lie outside the school system and go undetected for lengthy periods of time. Among these causes are physical- and mental-health problems and nutritional deficiencies. The subsection does not make school systems responsible for correcting such problems, but does require a good-faith effort to identify needs for services that are related to education and to refer students to health and social agencies that may meet the needs. Such services may range from the provision of eyeglasses to a visually impaired child to the provision of an adult mentor for a child who is in need of such support.

It should be noted that ITLPs are treated differently at schools deemed to be furnishing an environment for successful education (i.e., schools where 75 percent or more of the children are making satisfactory progress) and those that are not furnishing such an environment. In the former, principals are directed to prepare ITLPs for all at-risk students, while in the latter, ITLPs are to be prepared only for at-risk students whose parents request them. The reasons for this differential treatment are both pragmatic and substantive. Clearly, the administrative and other burdens involved in the development of such plans will be less onerous at schools where a small proportion of students is not making satisfactory academic progress than at schools where the proportion is greater. In addition, while attention to the individual needs of students is important in all cases, it is fair to assume that in schools where the success rate is very low, greater priority should be given to identifying and correcting systemic problems in the school's educational program.

Accordingly, Subsection (2) calls upon the principals of schools that after two years of effort are not providing an environment for successful education to prepare a schoolwide plan. This plan is intended to impel a self-diagnosis or evaluation in individual schools of where the barriers lie to implementation of the promising practices that the LEA has adopted. The plan should be drawn up with the participation of parents, teachers, and other staff and should result in concrete measures to improve teaching practices and other conditions important to the success of at-risk children.

PART IV

ENTITLEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN SCHOOL

A. Entitlement

Suggested Language

Every person who

1. *has reached the age where school attendance is no longer required but is under the age of 21; and*
2. *has not successfully completed high school but is no longer enrolled in school*
3. *shall be entitled to re-enroll in the public schools of the system where he or she resides or in an alternative program established pursuant to Section C of this Part.*

B. Duties of LEA

Suggested Language

1. *Each LEA shall be responsible for designing an educational program appropriate to the needs of persons who are no longer enrolled in school but are eligible for re-enrollment under Section A of this Part.*
2. *Each LEA shall be responsible for establishing an affirmative outreach program designed to inform persons who are no longer in school but who are eligible for re-enrollment under Section A of this Part of the opportunities for re-enrollment. The outreach program shall include reasonable efforts to locate and inform eligible*

persons of opportunities for re-enrollment, for example, through mailings sent to them at the last address listed for them in public school records.

C. Duties of State Government and SEA

Suggested Language

1. *The SEA shall establish guidelines on the content and the structure of educational programs appropriate to the needs of persons eligible for re-enrollment under Section A of this Part.*
2. *The SEA shall make available technical assistance to aid in the establishment of alternative schools or programs for persons eligible for re-enrollment under Section A of this Part.*
3. *The state shall make such revisions in its funding formula as are necessary to assure that LEAs or other entities are reimbursed for costs of educating students who re-enroll in school pursuant to the provisions of this Part.*

Comments on Entitlement of Young People Not in School: This Part is responsive to the growing awareness of the need to pay special attention to young people who have dropped out of school and are widely deemed to be beyond the purview or responsibility of public school systems because they have reached the age where compulsory attendance laws no longer apply.

Section A establishes the right of such students to re-enroll in public school systems until they reach the age of 21. Sections B and C set out the duties of the LEA and the SEA to design and implement educational programs that are geared to the needs of these older students. Such programs may differ from those offered in other school programs in a variety of ways. They may, for example, give significant attention to school-to-work transition, including skills and learning behaviors needed to function in the workplace. They may combine work with education and seek to develop assurances of employment opportunities for students who successfully complete the program. They may call upon the resources and participation of the business community in public-private partnerships. They may call for the establishment of classrooms and learning environments that are smaller in size than those of other programs. (See *A Time for Results*, National Governors' Association, 1986, p. 110.)

SEAs should have responsibility for providing guidance in the establishment of such programs and should be free to draw on research and evolving experience in doing so. Participation in programs that prove successful obviously may be made available not only to persons who re-enroll but to others who are in peril of dropping out of school.

Section C also calls for states to revise funding formulas where needed to provide reimbursement for re-enrolling students. Many state formulas do provide for students up to the age of twenty-one. For those that do not, the state share of educational costs for these older re-enrolling students should probably be no less than the portion assumed for younger students.

PART V

IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT

A. Monitoring and Evaluation

Suggested Language

1. *The SEA shall develop a system for collecting from each LEA the statistical and other information needed to evaluate compliance with this Act.*
2. *Each LEA shall submit to the SEA annually a report on its progress in meeting the requirements of this Act. The report shall include a description of the promising practices being implemented under Part III Section D, an identification of schools that do not meet the standards for providing an environment for succesful education specified in Part III Section E, and such other information as the SEA shall request under Subsection (1) above.*
3. *The SEA shall conduct periodic on-site reviews of LEAs to determine their progress in meeting the requirements of this Act. Priority in scheduling such reviews shall be given to LEAs that, on the basis of the report submitted under Subsection (2) or other information received by the SEA, appear to have serious problems of noncompliance. The SEA shall conduct on-site reviews of all districts at least once within three years from the enactment of this Act.*

Comments on Monitoring and Evaluation: As with many laws, successful implementation of this statute will depend in large measure on the development of good information systems and of a review process that will encourage and assist compliance without the necessity of resorting to adversary proceedings before courts or administrative agencies.

The information needed by the SEA will include achievement data, and information on student enrollment, teacher qualifications, textbooks, physical facilities, and instructional strategies being pursued by LEAs. Before implementing a system of data collection and reports, however, the SEA should conduct a careful review to assure that no more information is being requested than is needed to assist compliance with the prime purposes of the Act and that the information is being requested in a form that will be least burdensome to the LEA.

The section also calls for a series of self-initiated on-site compliance reviews by the SEA, with priority given to those LEAs that appear to be having the most serious problems of compliance.

B. Funding and Technical Assistance

Suggested Language

1. *There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.*

2. *The SEA shall make available to LEAs and to other entities and individuals having duties under the Act technical assistance that will aid in the performance of their responsibilities.*

Comments on Funding and Technical Assistance: Although many of the steps called for in the model statute can be accomplished without additional financial resources, clearly a significant increase in funding will be required. Each state will make its own assessment of new financial needs and of how existing resources can be redirected to provide more effective assistance to at-risk children.

Initial funding will be based on the number of at-risk children in each LEA. Subsequent funding will be in the form of incentives and rewards for making measurable progress.

It is not anticipated that funding for categorical purposes will be encouraged, except perhaps for areas that are recognized as essential to the success of the entire program, such as professional staff development and in-service training.

C. Duties of State Department and Agencies

Suggested Language

1. *Every state department agency that is responsible for providing or regulating related services specified in Part III, Sections B and F(1)(c), or that provides or regulates other services needed to assure accomplishment of the purposes of this Act shall cooperate with the SEA in the implementation of this Act.*

2. *In the event that the SEA concludes that a state department or agency is not providing the cooperation required by Section C(1) it shall, after making diligent efforts to secure such cooperation, notify the Governor of this fact. The Governor, after conducting such investigation as he or she deems necessary, shall take appropriate action to secure compliance with the duties specified in this Section.*

Comments on Duties of State Departments and Agencies: This Section recognizes the importance of some services provided by noneducation government departments and agencies to the accomplishment of the purposes of the model statute. For example, Section F(1)(c) of Part III calls for an identification (in individual teaching and learning plans) of related health, nutritional, or other social services needed by at-risk students and referral to appropriate agencies that provide such services. Section C(1)(f) of Part II requires the SEA to set standards governing the implementation of child-development programs for three- and four-year-olds that include "coordination with other public and private human-service agencies to assure diagnosis and treatment of conditions that place children at risk of school failure." For these provisions to be effective, the cooperation and assistance of government agencies concerned with health, nutritional, and other services are clearly needed.

In addition, Part IV calls for the establishment of education programs appropriate to the needs of students aged sixteen through twenty who re-enroll in school. Such programs will include attention to school-to-work transition and may combine education with job opportunities. Clearly cooperation and coordination with state and local employment service agencies will be needed.

Accordingly, this section sets out a duty of cooperation by such noneducation agencies and provides for intervention by the Governor, if needed, to redress failures of coordination or cooperation.

D. Enforcement

Suggested Language

Private Party Complaints

1. *Any person aggrieved by the failure of the LEA to comply with any provision of Parts II or III of this statute may file a written complaint with the SEA. A complaint may also be filed by a third party on behalf of a class of students aggrieved by failure of the LEA to comply with provisions of Parts II or III.*
2. *Such complaints shall be handled in an expeditious manner through the administrative process ordinarily used by the SEA to resolve controversies between individuals and LEAs. SEAs are encouraged to make use of alternative processes of dispute resolution provided that such processes hold reasonable promise of expediting rather than delaying ultimate resolution of the complaint.*
3. *Complainants shall be entitled to the assistance of a lawyer or other legal representative in the administrative proceeding.*
4. *Any complainant who receives an adverse determination by the final reviewing authority within the SEA or who fails to receive any final determination within 270 days after filing the complaint may file an action in the court of civil jurisdiction designated by state law for review of administrative action by the SEA. The proceedings to be followed, including appeals, shall be those specified in state law.*
5. *A prevailing plaintiff in a proceeding commenced under this section shall be entitled to such civil relief as the SEA or court deems just under the circumstances, provided, however, that no award of monetary damages shall be available under this Act. Relief available under this Act includes, but is not limited to, orders requiring an LEA to adopt specific practices under Part III Section D, requiring the transfer of students to schools providing an environment for successful education under Part III Section E, and requiring an LEA to observe the procedural requirements contained in Part III Section F. Prevailing plaintiffs shall also be entitled to awards of costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.*

Comments on Private Party Complaints: This Subsection is designed to make available the processes of state law usually employed for the resolution of controversies concerning public schools to effectuate the guarantees of the model statute. The draft calls for the exhaustion of administrative remedies provided for in the SEA before the filing of a court suit is permitted. A time limit of nine months (270 days) is specified, however, for SEA agency action, after which time a complainant may file a court action. This is in line with a number of federal statutes designed to prevent undue delay in administrative proceedings.

The draft encourages use of alternative forms of dispute resolution, such as informal mediation or conciliation. Third-party actions on behalf of a class are permitted.

Court action, too, will be in those state forums usually available for adjudicating controversies concerning the public schools.

The remedies obtainable are equitable in nature; that is, they are orders requiring the implementation of the special measures set forth in the statute to afford students the opportunity to emerge from at-risk status and to complete high school successfully. The remedies may include the mandating of expenditures of resources by LEAs or SEAs to accomplish the purposes of the Act. It is not contemplated, however, that damage awards would be available for failure of a student to become functionally literate.

E. SEA Enforcement

Suggested Language

1. *Where a compliance review undertaken under V A(3) reveals noncompliance by an LEA with provisions of this Act, the LEA shall submit to the SEA a plan for corrective action with a schedule for completing such action. The plan may include changes in the educational leadership at individual schools, systemic changes in practices within the LEA, or other measures. The SEA may require modifications in the substantive provisions or the schedule for completion of the plan.*
2. *Where an LEA fails materially to fulfill the requirements of a plan for corrective action or fails to carry out orders issued by the SEA under Section (1) above, the SEA shall take such additional action as is necessary to secure compliance with this Act. Such additional action may include a change in the governance of the LEA, which may be accomplished by the appointment of a monitor to oversee the operations of the LEA or by a declaration by the state superintendent of a vacancy in the position of the superintendent of the noncomplying LEA and the appointment of an interim replacement or by the reorganization of the noncomplying LEA through annexation by an adjacent district or by other means.*

Comments on SEA Enforcement: These final provisions are designed to give state agencies both the authority and the responsibility to take strong enforcement steps in cases of egregious noncompliance.

The provisions are modeled after those of several states which authorize forms of state trusteeship or reorganization in districts where major educational deficiencies persist. The draft provides a range and choice of remedies including annexation (see the Arkansas and Illinois Acts), replacement of officials (see the South Carolina Education Improvement Act), the appointment of a monitor (see the New Jersey Act). Other relevant state statutes include those in Georgia, Kentucky, New Mexico, Ohio, and Texas. Some of these statutes (e.g., Illinois) date back twenty years or more, as do statutes in several states that provide for state takeovers of districts that are fiscally distressed. Experience with actual implementation of these measures (or with their success as deterrents) is limited. Accordingly, the draft suggests a range, with the choice to be made by the state legislature (or by the Governor or the SEA through delegation by the state legislature) on the basis of what appears to be most appropriate or successful for that state.